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# Leadership Effectiveness In Curriculum Adoption For A Kindergarten

Bo Peng

*University of New England*

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LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS IN CURRICULUM ADOPTION  
FOR A KINDERGARTEN

By

Bo Peng

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Abstract

This study of leadership effectiveness focused on adoption, implementation, and evaluation of kindergarten curriculum. The researcher evaluated leadership effectiveness through the processes and outcomes of the team's decision-making. Research questions were: How does the kindergarten leadership team make decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum? How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate the quality of kindergarten curriculum? How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate student learning in the three curriculum areas of Chinese language, English language and science? How does the curriculum they have adopted align with the CKEG national standards for kindergarten curriculum in China? The program evaluation, guided by the CIPP proposed by Stufflebeam (1971), a model evaluating context, inputs, process and product, was used for the analysis of the curriculum decisions. Fairholm's (2009) four V's (values, vision, vectors, and voice) were applied to further analyze the curriculum decision-making values. Values are what principles the team holds on the curriculum, vision guides how the team adopts curriculum, vectors

describe how the team focuses the curriculum, and voice represents stakeholders' inputs and influences how the team adjusts the curriculum.

The findings suggest that adopting kindergarten curriculum was initially guided by values and vision, and the leadership team then considered vectors and voice. The kindergarten curriculum was adopted step by step according to those values and was taught step by step with each concern reflecting the principles held by the leadership team. The content of the curriculum reflected theories of instruction in three content areas: Chinese language, English language, and science. The leadership team emphasized developing students' thinking habits, developing vast interests, as well as developing advanced language ability. These values led to emphasis on early reading, early foreign language study, and early mathematics. Reflecting the team's values and vision, curriculum was adopted and designed with principles as vectors and adjusted with feedback as voice. This research brought new perspectives on curriculum adoption in kindergarten and how one kindergarten leadership team made decisions to adopt curriculum. The findings of this study added to the leadership research about school management and decision-making for curriculum adoption.

**Keywords:** early childhood, curriculum evaluation; CIPP, pedagogy leadership

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by

Bo Peng

It was presented on

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and approved by:

Michelle Collay, Ph.D., Lead Advisor

University of New England

Erin Connor, Ph.D., Secondary Advisor

University of New England

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Thirty-five years ago, when the school director in a Chinese kindergarten was expecting a child, she began to show an interest in early childhood education. When her son was born, she applied what she read about childhood education to her education practice as a parent. In those days, due to limited materials and resources for reading, what she could read about early childhood education was mostly from other countries. She had the documents that had been translated, as well as those in English (She had taught herself English). Gradually, when more resources became available, she was able to garner a deeper understanding of the importance of early childhood education, as well as the qualities associated with effective early educational experiences.

In 1999, she decided to make childhood education her career and established the ABC kindergarten. It was not easy at first. She borrowed money and rented a small house that was only 100 square meters. There were just 5 children at the beginning. The kindergarten did not make money for two years. And then, the situation began to change. Because of the achievements made by the students in their primary schools and the public praise made by the children's parents and the parents' friends, more and more children came to the kindergarten.

With this strong reputation and growth, the school director was able to move the kindergarten to a larger space. During these years, she read more books on early education, children's development and education psychology, and consulted with many childhood education experts. By seeking advice from them, learning from them, actively working with them, and taking qualification exams, she gradually became an expert herself. In those early

years, she combined what she learned about childhood education and the business of running a kindergarten. It was this combination of skills that allowed her to build an organization where she could serve more and more children.

The ABC kindergarten (pseudonym) has nurtured more than two thousand children in Chongqing, China, and has been ranked as a first level kindergarten of Chongqing since 2001. It has a reputation for providing a good education because almost all of the children are highly successful in both their in primary schools and middle schools. Many of the first graduates from 2001 not only successfully graduated from high school, but were enrolled in universities.

Kindergartens in China usually have two staff sections: a faculty section and an administrative section. In the faculty section, when a new teacher is hired by the general directors, training programs are provided for necessary classroom teaching. Then directors evaluate the teacher to make sure she is equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to teach language lessons and to teach science lessons. In kindergartens, teachers use curriculum selected by the leadership team to teach students literacy, reading, science, mathematics, and music. Their responsibility is teaching and then providing feedback on student learning.

The administrative section is responsible for administrative work such as accounting, food arrangement and security. When the school director employs new administrative staff, tests will usually be given to this new staff member to see if the expectations of administrative work can be met. The administrative manager is responsible for overseeing the works of all administrative personnel by giving instructions when work begins, checking progress from time to time, and giving suggestions to make sure that the school's mission and

goals are met.

While the ABC kindergarten has been successful, the leadership team members would like to improve their methods for curriculum improvement. Curriculum is the core competence of an educational organization. Curriculum standardizes the daily teaching activities and regularizes the student learning content. For teaching activities, curriculum standardizes the areas to teach in the classroom and outdoors and stipulates the ways to teach for different levels of each class. For student learning, curriculum regularizes what content students need to learn and how to make adjustments from evaluation. A looser, informal curriculum is different from a regularized, formal curriculum. A loose, informal curriculum which does not have a standardized approach may not provide students knowledge and activities that are helpful. However, a well-considered formal curriculum which integrates regularized teaching plans can infuse stronger learning. A systematic, properly-designed curriculum categorizes knowledge accordingly, allowing students learn step by step and make steady progress. From the perspective of an organization, implementing a strong curriculum can make a kindergarten outstanding in for students and competitive in the future.

When adopting curriculum, educators take different factors into consideration. The main purpose of curriculum is to ensure each student in the kindergarten benefits from learning experiences. Trawick-Smith (2009) argued: “Some children are socially oriented, working best cooperatively and in groups, other children value individual achievement and enjoy competition” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 43). When a kindergarten leadership team can adopt suitable curriculum for different students, their kindergarten can be truly responsible and successful. Feng Dequan (2003), an education



expert in China, proposed in his book *Education from Age Zero*, that when students are not quite comfortable with a single curriculum, kindergarten leaders should try to design different curriculum for different children. Also, Feng Dequan (2003) proposed that curriculum should be suitable for each student; if not, curriculum should be adjusted or changed according to the condition of each student.

The focus of the study was to evaluate leadership effectiveness through the curriculum adoption process in this kindergarten. Research on curriculum adoption strongly recommends that school-based teams follow a formal process. This research study explored the role of leadership team in making decisions about curriculum to use in the kindergarten. Findings from the study reported how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions and how decision-making influenced curriculum adoption.

### **Statement of the Problem**

When choosing curriculum, the kindergarten leadership team often struggles with which curriculum to adopt. In part, this is because the decision-making processes and protocols used for curriculum review and adoption are not formalized in kindergarten. How a kindergarten leadership team selects and adopts curriculum, how the team implements curriculum adequately, and how the team evaluates the learning outcomes, influence students' growth and how the school is organized. However, curriculum adoption is not a simple process and challenges the kindergarten leadership team. In some situations, members of the team have different opinions about curriculum adoption. In some situations, curriculum is adopted that is not very suitable for students according to the team's purported learning outcomes. After adopting curriculum, leaders may often find that different students

experience different learning outcomes. When evaluating curriculum, they find that there are a lot of adjustments that need to be made. The above problems may be caused by the lack of formal guidelines for the curriculum adoption process.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to analyze the decision-making process used by the kindergarten leadership team to adopt, implement, and evaluate curriculum for the academic and social development of kindergarten students. Curriculum, development of strong instruction, and how a school makes progress toward goals are interrelated. For high quality student learning to occur, proper curriculum needs to be adopted and evaluated for suitability. When the curriculum is properly selected, learning quality can be positively influenced with effective instruction and assessment.

### **Research Questions**

- How does the kindergarten leadership team make decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum?
- How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate the quality of kindergarten curriculum?
- How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate student learning in the three curriculum areas of Chinese language, English language and science?
- How does the curriculum they have adopted align with the CKEG national standards for kindergarten curriculum in China?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Kindergartens need effective leadership. Educational leaders need to understand

clearly the factors influencing education leadership. Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management domain, while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain. All aspects of development of students are priorities when adopting and implementing curriculum. The main curricula of this kindergarten are language, math, and science. The curricula examined in this research were Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum.

According to CKEG (2001), kindergartens in China should have curricula that include health, language, sociality, science and art. Health curriculum helps children to be healthy, language curriculum helps children to comprehend and speak, sociality curriculum helps children to communicate and exchange ideas, science curriculum stimulates children's interest in exploration, and art curriculum helps children learn drawing and music.

The team adopted curriculum concerning what students can learn and how students will learn. Curriculum was adopted to equip children with different kinds of knowledge and to make them learn with interest. The famous education expert Feng Dequan (2003) proposed that children should be educated from different areas in the kindergarten with the curricula which focus on different areas. With a focus on the curriculum areas of Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum and science curriculum, this research explored the issues of curriculum adoption.

### **Limitations**

While this research discussed leadership effectiveness in curriculum adoption in a kindergarten, the situations of other kindergartens might be different. This study focused on curriculum adoption which influenced leadership effectiveness. Kindergartens in different

cities in China might be somewhat different from the site under review. Some local factors might need to be taken into consideration, such as different cultures and different traditions among many others. This is a case study of one site, so the findings reflect the characteristics of this school. Also, the small size of the study and single site are limitations. The leadership documentation was limited to materials on hand.

### **Significance**

This research study added knowledge about how to make curriculum decisions in kindergartens. While there is research on school leadership, research focusing on curriculum adoption in kindergartens is limited. This research may help explain to readers and researchers what factors influence leadership decision-making about curriculum in kindergartens. This research brought new perspectives on educational leadership for the purpose of kindergarten leadership effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

It is a problem that decision-making about curriculum is not formalized and aligned with standards. Current decision-making may not be the most effective in guiding instruction in kindergarten classrooms. The purpose of this study was to document how one kindergarten leadership team adopted curriculum, implemented different subject area content, and evaluated those curricula. Findings characterize the nature of the leadership actions.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

This chapter is a literature review about the role of educational leadership in curriculum adoption. Kindergartens need effective leadership. Leadership characteristics are examined from the perspectives of curriculum adoption, curriculum evaluation, education influence, behaviors, ethics, communication, strategy, and culture. These factors play an important role in curriculum implementation and the design sound student learning outcomes.

#### **Kindergarten Educational Philosophy in China**

The Ministry of Education in China proposed new kindergarten education guidelines in 2001. The China Kindergarten Education Guidelines (CKEG) describes compulsory requirements for kindergartens in China, indicating that kindergarten leaders need to include five aspects in the curriculum when making decisions about how to adopt and implement curriculum. CKEG (2001) proposed five fields for kindergarten education: health, language, sociality, science, and art. According to CKEG, the kindergarten education should include these five fields, ensuring teachers learn how to teach these five fields and exposing students to these five fields. Each field should be interrelated and interconnected, and students' development should be nurtured and promoted. The specific goals in each of these areas are provided in Appendix A.

Pan (2005) proposed that the CKEG guideline significantly lessened the teacher's role as knowledge disseminator while emphasizing the child's role as a constructor of knowledge. This change in philosophy requires kindergarten leaders to adopt curriculum that is in line with the national requirements. However, there are obstacles to such an adoption. This

perspective on providing instruction for children is in sharp contrast to the previous 1981 outline (Ministry of Education, 1981) which treated content areas independently and endorsed teacher-directed, whole-class instruction. Difficulties in fully implementing the CKEG guidelines may be the result of a mismatch between the curriculum standards and teachers' existing repertoire of professional knowledge (Hua, 2004). Even if the CKEG was established sixteen years ago, many young teachers working in kindergartens are still trained for teacher-led curriculum, and some kindergarten leaders have not changed their mindset that teachers should lead the classroom.

This philosophic shift from a teacher-designed curriculum to a national prescribed curriculum has changed the way school leaders adopt curriculum. Kindergarten leaders now have to make decisions to add one or more of these five fields to the current curriculum or change the existing curriculum to align with the five fields if the current curriculum is outdated. The previous kindergarten guidelines proposed by Ministry of Education in 1981 stipulate that children need to be taught in classroom like primary school, each kind of knowledge should be taught by teachers and children should learn from instructors. The revised guidelines in 2001 proposed a big change in how teachers should support children's learning. According to the CKEG (2001), students should learn while playing, learn in the environment in which they live, learn with interest and should learn with teachers' enlightenment and encouragement. For example, children should learn through games, should learn what they see and what they touch, and should learn with interest with teachers' help. Curriculum should not be in regular format like that in primary school, it should be designed to engage students in learning based on their interests. From the curriculum required by the

CKEG (2001) guideline, students can develop in health, language, sociality, science, and art.

The adoption of the CKEG in 2001 has implications for kindergarten leaders who make decisions about curriculum adoption. When leading a kindergarten while implementing and evaluating curriculum, school leaders should recognize that curriculum adoption needs to take into consideration the five fields: health, language, sociality, science, art; while implementing and evaluating curriculum, school leaders should notice and make adjustments accordingly to teachers' perspectives. According to Papa (2011), evaluation or assessing teaching performance for its effectiveness is a fundamental aspect of instrumental design and improving the education process. According to CKEG (2001), the kindergarten curriculum evaluation framework in China requires that:

- Both education course content and requirements consider group needs and individual differences, supporting students to develop properly and feel sense of achievement.
- Education plans and education activities are built upon understanding the context of each class.
- The education content, methods, strategies and conditions stimulate children's learning interests.
- The process of education can provide children with beneficial learning experience.

### **Purpose of Curriculum**

Curriculum has many different dimensions, and the shape and content of a curriculum are determined by the philosophy of school leaders. In this section, literature about curriculum that supports students' development was presented. The next section addresses the importance of integration of the various disciplines, and the third section addresses teachers'

roles in enacting the curriculum purposes.

### **Students' development**

Students are different. Trawick-Smith (2009) argued: "Some children are socially oriented, working best cooperatively and in groups, other children value individual achievement and enjoy competition" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 43). Therefore, teachers should clearly understand each student and use appropriate curriculum for each student. According to NAEYC (2009), teachers' knowledge of child development and learning, understanding of curriculum, awareness of family and community relationships, and knowledge of assessment and interpretation of the professional role will influence what they do.

Hong Kong kindergartens use a curriculum implementation approach described as *school-based curriculum development* (SBCD). SBCD is a kindergarten curriculum style that is associated with greater teacher autonomy, professionalization and the pursuit of curricula better designed to meet the diverse needs of children and communities (Lo, 1999). Feng Dequan, a famous early childhood education expert in China, wrote a book named *Education from Age Zero*. In this book, he proposed that children should learn through games and study unintentionally, and teachers should teach through activities and instruct intentionally (Feng, 2003). Piaget (1952) argued: "There are four stages in children's development: sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage" (as cited in Santrock, 2004, p. 41).

Medina (2008), Hendrick and Weissman (2009) argued: "All learning begins with seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren,



2011, p. 46). Progressive educators believe that children should read and write and be little linguists. Research by Neuharth-Pritchett, Hamilton, and Schwanenflugel (2005) supported that alphabetic awareness includes children learning letter shapes, letter names, letter sound, and letter writing (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 341). Also, students should draw and design as if they were artists. The arts are integral to a high-quality education and must be included in the curriculum in order for students to succeed both in school and later in life (Arts Education Partnership, 2004). Drew and Rankin (2004) proposed: “Representing thoughts and feelings is an important way to learn, and engaging in the creative arts is to communicate, think, and feel” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 254). Besides the above fields that a kindergarten develops within its curriculum, physical development and social interaction are also important for the curriculum to be versatile. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 2002) recommended that children have experiences such as participating in sixty minutes of structured health-related fitness and movement skills per day and engaging in sixty minutes of unstructured physical activity. According to Berndt and Keefe (1995), Murphy (2002) and Payton (2008), children who have better social skills and more positive social attitudes tend to do better academically than less socially skilled children (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 398).

### **Integrating the disciplines**

Research by Copple and Bredekamp (2009) supported that early childhood education involves any group program serving children from birth to age 8 that is designed to promote children’s intellectual, social, emotional, language, and physical development and learning

(as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 3). Students need to develop different kinds of skills and different kinds of knowledge. However, the most important is promoting students' interest in learning. From the research of Clements and Wachowiak (2010), integrating the arts with other areas such as language, math, and science can add hands-on excitement to learning and create richer experiences for children (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 253).

A competent and suitable curriculum should not only include and coordinate different disciplines, but also integrate them so children understand the relationships of the disciplines to each other. Research by Eliason and Jenkins (2007) supported that such integration creates a common thread among activities that facilitates children's generalization of knowledge and skills from one experience to another (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 460). This valuable curriculum has rich content for teachers to teach and for students to learn. Also, Hendrick and Weissman (2010) argued: "Learning content requires such mental abilities as attending, listening, observing, remembering, and recounting" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 463).

### **Teachers' role in preparing curriculum and instruction**

Teaching should be thematic. Henniger (2009) proposed: "Thematic teaching provides hands-on discovery which is highly motivating to children" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 463). Thematic teaching needs thematic curriculum. This curriculum should be creative, well-considered, and effective. It should be suitable for different ages and different situations in different individuals. Brewer (2007) argued: "Themes and projects help practitioners organize their thinking, choose relevant activities and vocabulary to support

curricular goals, and locate resources prior to implementing their plans” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 462). Curriculum adoption, development and evaluation, needs to be carried out according to research, experience and the stakeholders.

### **Decision-making about Curriculum**

Kindergarten leadership teams should exercise decision-making practices to support effective curriculum adoption in each level. For kindergartens in China, decision-making is based on national CKEG requirements and on the specific situations of the kindergarten. National CKEG requires that kindergartens provide integrated curriculum from five disciplines: health, language, sociality, science and art. The five disciplines need to be included in the curriculum and kindergarten leadership team should design curriculum. If the current curriculum does not have these five disciplines, it should be replaced with new curriculum; if it has these five, it needs to be checked and strengthened using feedback from student assessments (CKEG, 2001).

### **Decision-making by discipline**

Languages (English and Chinese) and science are three very important disciplines for curriculum decision-makers to consider. To develop a language curriculum, the types and qualities of books must be addressed. Research by Otto (2009) argued that, when choosing which books to read to children or include in the classroom library, teachers should consider subject content, language complexity, and quality of illustration (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 346). Aesthetics should be integrated when adopting and evaluating the language curriculum. According to The Consortium of National Arts Education Association (CNAEA, 2010), aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature

of beauty, the nature and value of art, the inquiry process, and human responses.

According to Charlesworth and Lind (2009), concepts children are developing in science and language will be important for logical-mathematical extensions (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 319). The curriculum of science extends the comprehension of math. The curriculum that a kindergarten adopts for science should focus mainly on science enlightenment and the contents should be from the common phenomena in daily life.

### **Decision-making based on teachers' recommendations**

Decision-making for curriculum should take into consideration both children's development and teachers' recommendations. According to NAESP (2005), when early childhood teachers think about children, they find that children's learning is enhanced when all aspects of child development are addressed. When teachers deeply understand the curriculum and have a positive attitude towards constructing knowledge with little students, curriculum can be considered successful. When noticing that the curriculum is not appropriate, teachers need to seek new curriculum that is more suitable. According to CKEG (2001), a curriculum taking into consideration the suggestions of teachers can lead to a curriculum that is more suitable for children and more helpful for students' learning. In addition, CKEG (2001) suggested that teachers need to care about the individual learning of each student. Curriculum adoption should consider the opinions of teachers. CKEG emphasizes the importance of teacher and teachers' suggestions for curriculum adoption.

### **Decision-making based on parents' values**

Bern (2009) proposed: "Family members provide children with their first social

relationships, their models for behaviors and roles, a framework of values and beliefs, and intellectual stimulation” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 7).

Understanding the importance of parents’ roles can inform decisions by the kindergarten leadership team to implement integrated curriculum. Adopting this kind of integrated curriculum requires that parents work actively with kindergartens. CKEG (2001) proposed that parents can participate actively with kindergarten to exchange ideas, give suggestions and strengthen the knowledge. Also, according to CKEG (2001), kindergarten leaders are encouraged to collect opinions during the curriculum decision-making process and are encouraged to provide a communication channel with parents to shape kindergarten curriculum improvement. CKEG highlights the importance of parents when teaching at home and the importance of parents when participating in kindergarten curriculum.

### **Decision-making based on technology**

Kindergarten teachers need to develop methods of teaching with technology. According to Collins & Halverson (2009), to effectively incorporate technology into schools, educators must understand the imperatives of the technologies that are driving this revolution. Such knowledge influences how a kindergarten leadership team adopts, implements and evaluates its curriculum.

### **Theories on Leadership for Curriculum Decision-making**

“Dao that can be described is not the eternal Dao, name that can be described is not the eternal name.” This starts the Tao Te Ching written by Lao Tzu more than two thousand years ago, and the Tao Te Ching is still very influential. The Tao of Leadership written by Heider (2014) shed light on how the Tao might influence leadership and management.

Chapter 8 from Heider (2014) discussed ways leaders should act like water. Hatala (2005) proposed that the inner peace and balance of a leader produces best results for members and the organization: leaders should exert minimal influence in the lives of followers, encourage followers to take ownership of tasks, employ soft tactics, reject the use of violence, demonstrate creativity and flexibility, promote harmony with nature and others, live simply and humbly, and reject the trappings of status and promote equity. From the perspectives of Daoism and Lao Tzu, balance is the highest status that helps an individual make the greatest achievements and balance is the law of nature that defines how everything runs. As organization is the enlargement of individual, and organization is the miniature of nature, this philosophy sheds light on effective leadership in kindergartens. This section of the literature review addresses how leaders make decisions on curriculum for school development.

### **Leaders' behaviors**

Chuang (2013) proposed that a sustainable advantage of globalization depends on the skills of a leader who can manage diversity. Holloway (2012) proposed that a leader's behavior is a powerful display of mannerisms. Research conducted by Scagnelli and Cisi (2014) argued that to exercise sound interaction between leader and members, a leader needs to know the importance of shared values. Sharing values is a management strategy that emphasizes identifying and expanding the connection between societal and economic progress. Conrad and Newberry (2011) proposed that business communication is the sending and receiving of verbal and non-verbal messages within the organizational context. This description sheds light on the importance of communication. Strategic planning can include decision-making. Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management

domain, while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain. Strategic planning and decision-making reflect the leaders' values.

## **Culture**

### *Globalization*

Chuang (2013) proposed that in the competitive landscape of the 21st Century, a sustainable advantage of globalization depends on the skills and abilities of a leader who can manage diversity and implement increasingly complex business strategies. Leadership in multicultural working environment faces challenges such as blended organizational culture, group dynamic, gender differences, and cultural diversity. Leaders should develop self-awareness, understand cultural stereotypes, create a vision, develop a global mindset and take social responsibility to be successful as a global leader. King (2009) proposed that knowledge management is from knowledge management processes to organization processes to intermediate outcomes to improved organizational performance. With this kind of organizational learning, leaders can build a competent organization that can generate internal work performance and adapt to outside environments, thus leading kindergartens effectively.

## **Ethical leadership**

### *Ethics*

Okantey (2013) proposed that ethical leadership is the appropriate conduct through individual actions and interpersonal associations and the endorsement of such behavior among employees through mutual communication, underpinning, and decision-making processes. From his opinion, when a leader exercises ethical behaviors, the leader seeks agreement among all stakeholders, identifies a common ground regarding what the

expectations will be, grasps what the proposed change will mean to all stakeholders, develops a tactical plan for the change process, and builds a plan for the change process. With these strategies, an educational leader presents a vision, builds a self-motivated code of conduct, and creates a supportive environment for values and ethics-based practices.

### *Integrity*

According to Moorman and Grover (2009), integrity is not only defined by internal consistencies, but also defined by the external consistency of those actions with either individual moral frameworks or community moral frameworks. Leader integrity matters to followers because of the information it communicates to followers that may help them deal with the inherent uncertainty of follower decisions, just as Holloway (2012) proposed that a leader's behavior is a powerful display of mannerisms that conveys the expectations and values of the organization and sets the tone for the organizational climate. According to Holloway (2012), there are two types of leader behaviors that are related to leader integrity and inform leadership ethics: task-oriented behaviors and relations-oriented behaviors. With task-oriented behaviors, leaders should consider initiation of structure, role assumption, persuasion, and superior orientation; with relations-oriented behaviors, leaders should understand tolerance of freedom, tolerance of uncertainty, demand reconciliation, predictive accuracy and integration. These theories are related to one another, are related to ethics that a leader draws upon, and contribute to his or her integrity.

### *Trust*

Mullane (2009) argued that once an ethical environment is created, employees and management develop trust in one another. Relationships between a leader and teachers in a



kindergarten are related to organization performance. According to the trust-building model proposed by Hiland (2008), communication trust is the trust of disclosure, competence trust is the trust of capability, contractual trust is the trust of character, and identification-based trust is identifying with each other.

### *Shared values and progress*

Shared values contribute to the process of achieving appropriate status between leader and members. Research by Scagnelli and Cisi (2014) supported that articulating shared values is a management strategy that emphasizes identifying and expanding the connection between societal and economic progress. According to authors, internality and externality are connected with each other. After creating shared values, use of shared values should be a management strategy that identifies and expands the connections between societal and economic progress by addressing social problems that intersect with the business. With shared values, leader and members in a kindergarten can understand more deeply the beliefs of each other, which generates trust and mutual respect, thus producing excellent work performance and leadership effectiveness.

### **Leaders as communicators**

Leading kindergartens requires excellent communication. Conrad and Newberry (2011) proposed that business communication is the sending and receiving of verbal and non-verbal messages within the organizational context. Communication can be categorized into organizational communication skills, leadership communication skills, and interpersonal communication skills. With organizational communication skills, educational leaders can initiate open discussion, resolve conflict, and make convincing presentations. With leadership

communication skills, educational leaders can arouse enthusiasm, create group synergy, and provide motivation. When a kindergarten leader is equipped with interpersonal communications skills, the leader can listen actively, show respect, and build relationships. Mayfield (2009) proposed that leader-to-follower work speech communication can be categorized into three speech types: direction-giving language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language. Motivating language leads to sound leader-member relationship, and a sound leader-member relationship leads to sound performance, resulting in job satisfaction and productive organization development. When communication becomes effective, kindergarten leadership will become effective.

### **Leaders need to develop strategies**

According to Kotter (2012), leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations in the first place or allows them to adapt to significantly changing circumstances. Kindergartens, like other organizations, need leadership strategies to develop. Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management domain, while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain. Thinking and planning are different, just as leadership and management are different. The four V's concept (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describes a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work. One of similarities of Fairholm (2009) and Hiland (2008) is that they both emphasize the relationships that a leader can build. If a kindergarten leadership team deals with activities in a complex working environment, they need to recognize that culture plays a very important role. Yeager and Nafukho (2012) proposed that a multitude of

demographic and non-demographic differences should be considered by companies when building teams to maximize performance. In a sound organizational culture, diverse teams should include a work team, a parallel team, a project team, and a management team.

Different teams collaborate with each other and complement each other so that the culture can pave the way for leadership effectiveness. This requires organizational learning and knowledge management. Research by King (2009) argued that knowledge management is a set of relatively new organizational activities that are aimed at improving knowledge, knowledge-related practices, organizational behaviors and organizational performance. Such knowledgeable leaders can facilitate the learning process, manage cultural differences, and strengthen cooperation. An individual's cultural values are shaped by the social identities driven by age, ethnicity, gender and race. Such knowledge helps a leader in a multicultural organization think more broadly about how to make leadership effective.

Educational processes influence curriculum adoption, curriculum adoption influences quality of teaching, and quality of teaching influences organization changes. According to Fullan (2001), understanding the change process is less about innovation and more about innovativeness. Innovativeness can make an educational organization more responsible for students, more qualified for curriculum adoption, and more responsible for contributions to society. For the kindergarten leadership team effectively implement curriculum, qualified educational leaders need to be developed. According to Adair (2009), the steps are: training, selecting, assigning leaders as mentors, giving the chance to lead, educating for leadership, proposing a strategy for leadership development, and being the chief executive. Curriculum adoption and evaluation should take into consideration different opinions and suggestions.

According to Velsor, McCauley and Ruderman (2010), leadership is the process of producing direction, alignment, and commitment in collectives. With direction, kindergarten leadership team can adopt proper curriculum; with alignment, curriculum can be implemented and evaluated; with commitment, students and kindergarten can have a bright future.

### **Conclusion**

The school leadership literature and the general leadership literature are interconnected with each other. School leadership teams are concerned about curriculum selection, curriculum adoption, curriculum implementation, curriculum evaluation, how curriculum influences learning outcomes, and how curriculum influences organization development. General leadership concerns address how culture, ethics, communication, and strategy influence the way leaders lead. Culture, ethics, and strategy are also focuses of school leadership. For school leaders to successfully lead a school, curriculum decision-making, curriculum adoption, curriculum influence, ethics, communication, culture, and strategy are the many important factors discussed above that need to be taken into consideration.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Leadership effectiveness in kindergartens is a requirement for effective curriculum decision-making. Curriculum adoption, implementation, and evaluation can influence students' learning outcomes and can influence how a school makes progress as an organization. The qualitative methodology supports a case study of a school's leadership team's curriculum decision-making. The focus of the case is the process used by the team to adopt, implement, and evaluate curriculum in three content areas: Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum. This research was based on the case of a kindergarten which had provided early childhood education for nineteen years.

There were two evaluation models used for the study. One was the CIPP which means context, inputs, process, and product. This curriculum assessment approach allowed the researcher to examine curriculum implementation through a site study, whereby the existing kindergarten curriculum, leaders' decision-making, and curriculum adoption, implementation, and evaluation was documented. Fairholm's 4 V's were used to evaluate dimensions of the leadership team's decision-making. The use of those two frameworks for data analysis is explained later in the chapter.

#### **Setting**

The setting of the study is the ABC kindergarten in the Chongqing area of China. The ABC kindergarten serves students whose ages range from two years old to six years old.

There are eight classrooms in the kindergarten: two junior classrooms for age 2 to age 3, two

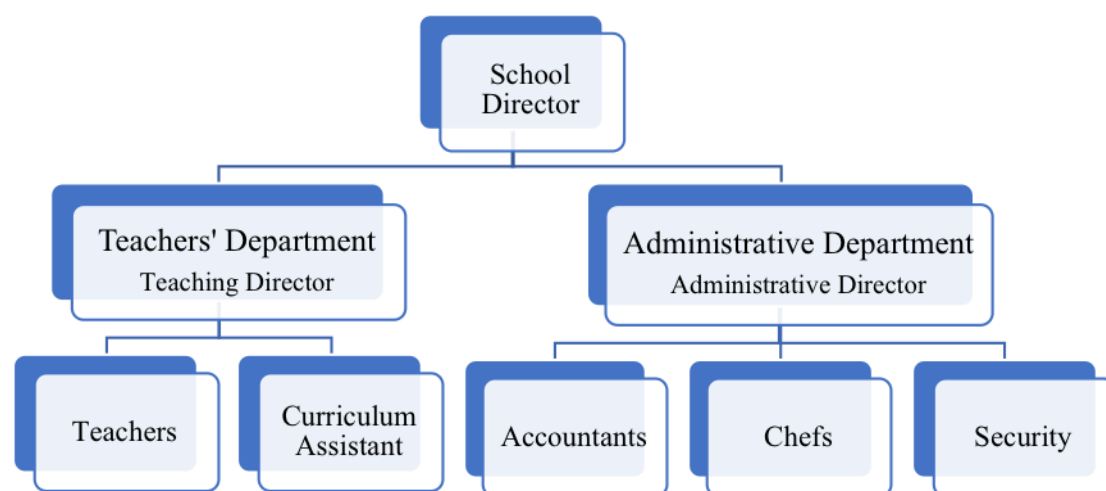
middle classrooms for age 3 to age 4, two senior classrooms for age 4 to age 5 and two preschool classrooms for age 5 to age 6. Each classroom has a study room and a bedroom.

The study room is for playing and learning, and the bedroom is for sleeping after lunch.

There are two playgrounds for the children's activities and exercises. The chefs in the kitchen make food for the children and teachers. Toys and books are provided to the children so that they can play while learning and learn while playing.

### *Mission and Goals of This Kindergarten*

- To make the kindergarten a home for children, helping to develop the children's talents.
- To help children learn to be well-behaved, creative, and curious.
- To encourage thinking, advanced language development, independent spirits, and strong communication skills.



*Figure 3.1* The Organization Structure

The above is a chart of the organization structure of this kindergarten. There are two departments: the teachers' department and the administrative department. The teachers teach

the children, while the administrative staff supports the work of teachers, facilitates the process for teachers to teach children and provides a bridge between teaching and administrative work. The kindergarten leadership team, which includes school director, teaching director, and curriculum assistant, is responsible for decision-making about curriculum adoption and evaluation.

### **Five fields required by CKEG**

The CKEG national standards in China require that Chinese kindergartens adopt curriculum on five fields: health, language, sociality, science and art.

Health Curriculum - With the health curriculum, children can learn to be healthy and can learn to be happy in group living.

Language Curriculum - With the language curriculum, children can learn to be happy to communicate with others and talk politely.

Sociality Curriculum - With social curriculum, children can positively participate in different kinds of activities with confidence.

Science Curriculum - With science curriculum, children can learn to be interested in the surrounding objects and phenomena, can have curiosity and desire to learn.

Art Curriculum - With art curriculum, children can learn to love the beauty from environment, life and art.

### **Research questions**

The research questions that guide this study are:

- How does the kindergarten leadership team make decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum?

- How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate the quality of kindergarten curriculum?
- How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate student learning in the three curriculum areas of Chinese language, English language and science?
- How does the curriculum they have adopted align with the CKEG national standards for kindergarten curriculum in China?

### **CIPP and four V's**

The logic model used Stufflebeam's CIPP model (1971). The CIPP model is a management-oriented approach developed to meet the need of program decision makers who use the information collected to inform specific decisions that should be made. CIPP means context, inputs, process, and product. In *context*, site description and the history of the site was described. In *inputs*, the existing kindergarten curriculum and the CKEG national standards on curriculum was analyzed. In *process*, how the leadership team makes decisions and the activities to implement curriculum was analyzed. In *product*, there was a gap analysis to determine what curriculum had been implemented using the lens of the four V's proposed by Fairholm (2009). Within the CIPP framework, the process of decision-making by the leadership team was documented and analyzed.

Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management domain while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain (p. 11). The program evaluator (researcher) considered the leadership team's decision-making through the lens of strategic planning and strategic thinking as presented by Fairholm. Strategic planning characteristics were used to evaluate how the leadership team managed leading the organization and how strategic



thinking was used to evaluate how the leadership team adopted curriculum.

Fairholm (2009) proposed a four V's framework. The four V's concepts (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describe a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10).

The *process* of CIPP and the four V's proposed by Fairholm are connected. Process in CIPP means process, procedure and related adjustments. Values give meaning to the *process* on what values the team holds on the curriculum, vision gives meaning to the *process* on how the team adopts curriculum, vectors give meaning to the *process* on how the team uses the curriculum, and voice gives meaning to the *process* on how the team adjusts the curriculum. The reliance on and prioritization of values, purpose, and identity are the main concepts that drive strategic thinking, whereas the achievement of goals and the control of actionable events drive strategic planning (Fairholm, 2009, p.11).

### **Participants/Sample**

This research is a case study of activities of one leadership team in a kindergarten program in China. The documentation supported exploration of a case and the researcher sought to provide an in-depth understanding of the case of one team's curriculum adoption. The case study used documentation generated by the leadership team for about eighteen years as the text for analysis of leadership decisions. Documentation from one academic year was used more specifically for the analysis.

### **The organization and the leadership team**

The organization is a Chinese kindergarten which was established in 1999. There are

eight classrooms in the kindergarten. The leadership team has three members: a curriculum assistant, a teaching director, and a school director. The curriculum assistant has rich experience in choosing which instructional materials to collect. The teaching director has first-hand experience from classroom observation and feedback from teachers and parents. The school director works closely with them and makes final decisions.

### **Types of meetings**

Decision-making about curriculum and instruction occurred in leadership meetings that have been held monthly or bi-monthly since the school was established. The types of meetings the team held were meetings on curriculum adoption, curriculum evaluation, and curriculum implementation. Data that informed the team's decision-making included student assessments, teachers' feedback and parents' feedback. Exchanges and decisions made over one year of meetings were presented as evidence.

### **Data**

The data that were examined included leadership activity documentation and executive versions of the curricula developed for this kindergarten. The documents this kindergarten leadership team had kept from the start of the business provided useful information about the merits and shortcomings of curriculum. These documents included the current curricula, curriculum adoption materials, curriculum assessments, meeting notes, memos, short-term and long-term plans, strategic plans, plans for social responsibility, and social networks materials. These materials were used to examine how the curriculum influenced the development of this kindergarten, students' learning, and how curriculum evaluation was conducted to assess education quality.

## Analysis

To analyze the documentation available on curriculum adoption processes, the researcher used the CIPP model. Used by many researchers since 1971, it is a very useful approach to evaluation. Tokmak (2013), for example, conducted research on an online master's program where the CIPP model proved to be successful for that evaluation. Tokmak (2013) indicated that the CIPP model used in that study and enabled the researchers to focus on content, inputs, process, and product of the online master's program from the perspectives of different stakeholders: students, instructors, and managers. Emphasizing content, inputs, process and product, the CIPP model was a useful and practical evaluation model.

Feng Dequan (2003) used the CIPP model as described in his book *Education from Age Zero*. When he evaluated the effectiveness of a curriculum, he used the CIPP model. He focused on content, inputs, process and product to review different kinds of curricula; he focused on content, inputs, process and product to check different curricula for different ages; he focused on content, inputs, process and product to see what students can learn; he focused on content, inputs, process and product to check the learning outcomes (Feng, 2003).

“The hands that push the cradle are the hands that push the world.” This is from another famous educator Wang Donghua (2003) in China. He emphasized very much the importance of early education and the importance of proper curriculum for young students. From his book *Finding Mother*, he used the CIPP model to design and evaluate his curriculum for kindergarten. He used his research and experience as context, put them into kindergartens where teachers had relationships with him, watched the process, and checked the results. Then he evaluated the context, inputs, process and product.

Zhang (2011) used the CIPP model for service-planning programs. Service-learning in educational settings combined curriculum and community service. Zhang (2011) assessed community needs using context evaluation, formulated plans using inputs evaluation, monitored progress using process evaluation, and assessed impact using product evaluation. With the CIPP model, *context* identified the needs of service providers and community; *inputs* prescribed a responsive project; *process* monitored the project process, and *product* measured the project outcomes.

### **Fairholm's four V's analysis**

Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management domain, while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain. According to Fairholm (2009), the four V's concepts (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describe a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work.

*Values* - "Values trigger behavior and reflect meaning, purpose, commitment of both leader and the led" (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The CKEG national standards emphasize what children can learn and how children learn. The values of the team align with the values of the CKEG national standards: children should learn with interest and need to develop in the five fields (health, language, sociality, science, and art). However, the kindergarten leadership team members have their own values: students should develop thinking habits, develop vast interests, become curious about different things, develop advanced language ability, as well as form positive characteristics: friendly communication, a polite attitude, and confidence.

*Vision* - "Vision operationalizes the value set; making sense for others what the values

really mean or what they can do for us now and in the future” (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). When the kindergarten was established in 1999, the school director had a vision to encourage: early reading, early foreign language study, early mathematics, and early arts training.

*Vectors* - “Vectors operationalize the magnitude and direction of vision-driven action and akin to the idea of group missions” (Fairholm, 2009, p. 11). Below is an example of an adoption decision in each of the three major strands:

	<b>Curriculum direction</b>	<b>Alignment with the values of the team</b>	<b>Curriculum adjusted</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Parents consulted</b>	<b>Opinions from family about the change</b>
Chinese Language	Communicate, read and write in Chinese.	Align with advanced language ability.	Add an app for poetry.	Students expressed more interest in learning Chinese with poetry.	Yes.	The app is useful and stimulates students’ interest.
English Language	Interested in communicate in English.	Align with friendly communication.	Add an app for pronunciation.	Students were experiencing some difficulty when pronouncing some long English words.	No.	Students seem to pronounce much better.
Science	Interested in science phenomena	Align with thinking habit, vast interest, and different curiosity.	No.			

*Table 3.1* An Example of an Adoption Decision in Each of the Three Major Strands

*Voice* - Voice makes leadership relationships work, based on the level of alignment with values, vision and vectors at play (Fairholm, 2009, p. 11). From the classroom observation, the effectiveness of curriculum can be observed, which is what the teaching

director is doing to inform the decision-making process. The teaching director's voice strives to adequately represent what teachers say about the learning outcomes of each student. Parents' voice also influences the decision-making process. However, since parents' expectations are similar to teachers, the decision-making from teachers often addresses parents' voice.

### **Potential Limitations**

#### **Contents of curriculum documents**

The lessons of the Chinese language curriculum and the lessons of the science curriculum were searched for, chosen, designed, and adopted by the kindergarten leadership team. These lessons were adopted based on the CKEG national standards and on the values of the kindergarten leadership team members themselves. For the English language curriculum, the New Concept English Starter A and Starter B books provide the content. The lessons cannot be changed because they are well arranged for English instruction.

#### **Researcher's position and potential biases**

According to Brannick and Coghlan (2007), insider research presents both opportunities for and challenges to the researcher. The benefits of studying one's own organization are: easy access to documents and a pre-understanding of the organization. Access refers to how easy or difficult it is for the researcher to obtain the documents from the organization. Easy access to documents gives the insider researcher opportunities to look for research materials. Pre-understanding refers to the knowledge that the researcher has about the organization before conducting research. Pre-understanding about an organization may be an advantage to insider researcher compared to an outside researcher, since the insider

researcher generally has more detailed knowledge about the research site. Challenges to the researcher include the need to manage role duality and organizational politics. Role duality refers to the situation that the researcher has both the role of organization member and researcher, and managing organizational politics refers to the situation that conducting the research may have influence on the organization policy.

This research study took place in a private family business which was established by the researcher's mother in 1999. The findings were influenced by the researcher's status as an insider. The researcher was able to look up all the documents that were needed for the research. This insider status brought benefits to the researcher, including access to documentation of curriculum adoption materials, curriculum assessment, meeting notes, memos, short-term and long-term plans, strategic plans, plans for social responsibilities, and social networks materials.

The researcher's relationship with the kindergarten staff prevented the researcher from interviewing the teachers, since teachers reported to a family member. Teachers might give careful opinions due to their relationships with the researcher's family. Some teachers might have been more comfortable to give answers because they had worked in this school for many years and were familiar with the researcher. Other teachers might be reluctant to give answers because they had not worked very long and were not that familiar with the researcher or the school. The researcher was, therefore, careful to focus on the leadership team's actions, rather than the teachers, as the participants of the study. The research conducted by the researcher was not intended to influence the organization politics or the way of management.

The researcher kept a reflective journal to help reflect on biases. The journal was

written once per week. How the relationship with the teachers influenced the observation and how the relationship with kindergarten influenced the researcher the way of thinking were addressed in the journal to draw the researcher's attention to possible biases during the process of research. The researcher's relationship with the teachers might lead the researcher to make the same observation as teachers. The researcher's relationship with the kindergarten leadership team might lead the researcher to think more about its merits and ignore the negatives. For example, the researcher might emphasize too much the advantages compared to other kindergartens. The stance might cause him to ignore the negatives which should be noted. Keeping the journal helped the researcher reflect on biases.

### **One kindergarten as a case**

Case study is instructive, but some findings may not be generalizable. Approaches to addressing problems or situations may not be practical in other Chinese kindergartens or foreign kindergartens. Although CKEG has the same curriculum requirements for both private and public kindergartens in China, different kindergartens may have different processes of curriculum adoption. Teaching methods may be different. Also, curriculum evaluation may be different.

However, this small-scale research case study used a common curriculum assessment framework (Stufflebeam CIPP) and a leadership analysis approach found in educational research (Fairholm, 2009). The kindergarten leadership team's effectiveness was presented from the perspectives of curriculum adoption and leader decision-making, and may still be useful to inform others' perspectives on effective leadership in kindergartens.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

This chapter presents and analyzes the decision-making processes for the curriculum adoption which were influenced both by the CKEG national standards and by the values of the kindergarten leadership team members themselves. The CIPP model was used as an analysis tool to examine the context, inputs, process and product of the curriculum. The analysis addressed how curriculum was adopted, implemented and evaluated.

Stufflebeam (1971) developed the CIPP evaluation model which provided a framework to examine the decision-making process for program development. The evaluation process meets the needs of program administrators who are faced with decisions at different points during curriculum implementation. The “C” in CIPP means *context*. In context evaluation, information is gathered prior to program selection to identify the needs of the students to be addressed by a program. The “I” means *inputs*. Information is gathered to aid decisions in the input evaluation regarding which resources are available and what the specific plans for implementation should be. The “P” means *process*. In process evaluation, the evaluator documents decisions made at this stage including whether the plan is being implemented as intended, what barriers have arisen, and what changes need to be made in the adoption process. The next “P” means *product*. In product evaluation, the outcomes of the implementation are considered. Questions are asked regarding: to what degree the program reflects the goals; whether or not to continue the program; and what changes need to be made to improve program outcomes. This is the CIPP model, a management-oriented approach, that the researcher used to analyze the data.

In the second part of the chapter, the leadership team's activities and decision-making procedures are analyzed through the lens of Fairholm's (2009) four V's of leadership: values, vision, vectors, and voice. Values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). Values give meaning to the process on what values the team holds about on the curriculum, vision gives meaning to the process of how the team adopts curriculum, vectors give meaning to the process on how the team uses the curriculum, and voice gives meaning to the process on how the team adjusts the curriculum.

The two parts of the chapter provide perspectives on how kindergarten curriculum was adopted, how the leadership team's values were made evident, and the implication of those decisions on the curriculum.

### **The case study of the ABC kindergarten**

The ABC kindergarten serves students whose ages range from two years old to six years old. There are eight classrooms in the kindergarten: two junior classrooms for age 2 to age 3, two middle classrooms for age 3 to age 4, two senior classrooms for age 4 to age 5 and two preschool classrooms for age 5 to age 6. The ABC kindergarten has been ranked as a first level kindergarten of Chongqing since 2001, which means that the kindergarten received a certificate from the Chongqing Education Committee indicating the kindergarten is among the best.

To obtain a first level rating, there are some standards that must be met: site, decoration, education quality, and the year of establishment.

- Site - The kindergarten site should be a site that is approved by the authority to be a proper and legal place for carrying out kindergarten education.
- Decoration - The classroom decoration and the wall decoration need to be beautiful and meaningful.
- Education quality - The education needs to meet the CKEG national standards on the five fields.
- Year of establishment - Usually, the requirement of year of establishment is three years, at least two years.

Besides receiving the rating of a first level kindergarten, this kindergarten has reputation from parents for producing successful students, as almost all of the children are highly successful in both their primary schools and middle schools. Many of the first graduates from 2001 not only successfully graduated from high school, but also enrolled in universities.

### **CKEG (China Kindergarten Education Guidelines)**

Most Chinese kindergartens follow the CKEG national standards on curriculum adoption. The CKEG has requirements on five fields: health, language, sociality, science, and art. While the curriculum strands presented in more detail number three rather than five, the five addressed by the CKEG national standards are presented to provide context:

<b>Content</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Health (健康)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy</li> <li>• Happy in group living</li> <li>• Form sound habits of living</li> <li>• Have the ability to live by oneself</li> <li>• Learn necessary safety knowledge</li> <li>• Can be interested in physical activities</li> </ul>	Assess if children form the habit of keeping healthy, if children can live by oneself.

Language (语言)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy to communicate with others and talk politely</li> <li>• Can pay attention to what others are talking and can understand daily expressions</li> <li>• Can express clearly what they want to express</li> <li>• Can be interested in listening to stories and reading books</li> </ul>	Assess if children can express clearly, if children are interested in learning language.
Sociality (社会)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can positively participate in activities</li> <li>• Can be willing to communicate with others</li> <li>• Can understand and comply with basic social behavior regulations</li> <li>• Can make effort to do what they can do</li> <li>• Can love people, group, hometown and country</li> </ul>	Assess if children have simple proper social behaviors, if children can communicate and make effort to do something.
Science (科学)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be interested in the surrounding objects and phenomena</li> <li>• Can learn from life and games the quantitative relations of objects</li> <li>• Can love and protect animals and plants</li> </ul>	Assess if children are interested in learning science.
Art (艺术)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can love the beauty from environment, life and art</li> <li>• Can be interested in art activities</li> <li>• Can perform art activities</li> </ul>	Assess if children love beauty, if children are interested in art and performing art.

*Table 4.1* The National Standards of CKEG (2001)

The previous CKEG standards were established in 1981, which treated content areas independently and endorsed teacher-directed, whole-class instruction. The updated CKEG national standards were established in 2001 after the establishment of the ABC kindergarten. The ABC kindergarten was established in 1999, but that curriculum did not follow the 1981 standards. The leadership team had different values from 1981 standards as the values were to: educate students to encourage thinking habits, engender vast interests, encourage curiosity, and support advanced language ability. The ABC kindergarten leadership team encouraged positive characteristics such as friendly communication, having a polite attitude, and exhibiting confidence. The above values were operationalized by their vision of early reading, early foreign language study, early mathematics, and early arts training. After 2001, the

kindergarten leadership team found that their values aligned with the 2001 CKEG standards and extend the 2001 CKEG standards.

### **Curriculum strands and the leadership team's beliefs**

Curriculum values of the ABC kindergarten leadership team about curriculum adoption did not align with the 1981 standards. The decision-making that reflects their values coincided with the 2001 CKEG standards and also built upon the 2001 CKEG standards. The ABC kindergarten leadership team members adopted curriculum according to their own values, but they also valued the CKEG. They adopted different kinds of materials to integrate into a curriculum, such as Chinese language curriculum. The students in this kindergarten learned more and more deeply than the requirements of CKEG.

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Leadership team's beliefs about the purpose of curriculum</b>	<b>Decisions made</b>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should establish sound relationships between teachers and students and among companions</li> <li>• Should educate students to be clean and healthy</li> <li>• Should give students knowledge about safety</li> </ul>	The kindergarten leadership team made decisions to teach students how to be clean, how to be polite and how to get along with each other through the health curriculum.
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should make students form the habit of careful listening and should develop students' language comprehension ability</li> <li>• Should encourage students to express their thinking and feeling</li> <li>• Should use reading, drawing and other methods to simulate students' interest in books and writing</li> </ul>	The kindergarten leadership team made decisions to teach students Chinese and English as well as putting the two languages into practice through the language curriculum.
Sociality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should lead students to participate in different kinds of activities</li> <li>• Should provide each student with the opportunities to express their strengths and make achievements</li> <li>• Should make students recognize, experience and understand basic social behavior regulations</li> </ul>	The kindergarten leadership team made decisions to teach students how to actively participate in activities, how to work together in activities, and how to help each other in activities through the sociality curriculum.

Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should stimulate students' interest in surrounding objects and phenomena</li> <li>• Should create relax environment for students' exploration activities</li> <li>• Improve students' ability to learn cooperatively</li> <li>• Should make students feel how science technologies influence daily life</li> </ul>	The kindergarten leadership team made decisions to teach students science lessons for interest stimulation through the science curriculum.
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should introduce students to beautiful objects</li> <li>• Should take all students into consideration, pay attention to different characteristics and needs of different students</li> <li>• Help students to improve performance skills</li> </ul>	The kindergarten leadership team made decisions to teach students painting, piano, singing and dancing through the art curriculum.

*Table 4.2* Chart with Decision-making Activities

The curricula examined in this research were Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum. These three curriculum strands were identified for the analysis section because they align with the CKEG national standards and aligned more with the vision of the kindergarten leadership team members themselves: early reading, early foreign language study, early mathematics, and early arts training.

Here is the general vision of the ABC kindergarten leadership team. This vision is found in the early organization documents when the kindergarten was established.

*Early Reading* - Reading is the golden key to potential development. According to the children's psychological characteristics, this kindergarten uses activity literacy, game literacy, scenario literacy, and reading literacy, so that children can recognize objects and develop literacy simultaneously, speak and read simultaneously, and can read extensively after three years of study.

*Early Foreign Language Study* - English is the passport to the world. This kindergarten helps children memorize letters, word and sentences happily, interestingly and quickly, gradually

developing the habit of and the ability to communicate in English and read English books.

*Early Mathematics* - Mathematics is the foundation of all science. At the mathematics sensitive period of early childhood, this kindergarten focuses mathematics education on the senses, mainly on operational learning and then on activity game learning. This helps children learn to calculate through movement and stimulates children's interest in learning mathematics by developing mathematical thinking skills, and mental agility, flexibility, and creativity.

*Early Arts Training* - Children participate in dance, piano, chess, calligraphy, painting, imaginary painting, clay and other activities. They are nurtured in a colorful art environment. All of them are happy and lively, with broad interests, positive and confident attitudes, and courage. Children's emotional experience, artistic sensibility, artistic imagination and creativity get nurtured and their artistic potentials get developed.

In the next section, the decision-making process used by the kindergarten leadership team is presented.

### **Leadership team expertise**

The kindergarten leadership team was established by the school director and the members were selected by the school director. The team members are school director, curriculum assistant, and teaching director. The school director established the kindergarten and has managed the school for eighteen years. She has rich experience in education and management. The curriculum assistant, who has worked in this kindergarten for eleven years, is responsible for searching for curriculum. The teaching director, with thirteen years' experience in this kindergarten, works closely with teachers and has firsthand information on

students and curriculum including student learning outcomes, how teachers implement curriculum, how teachers assess students, and how teachers make adjustments to the curriculum. The kindergarten leadership team makes decisions about what curricula to adopt, how to implement the curricula, and how to align the curricula with students' development.

*Leadership team chart*

	<b>Years working in the role</b>	<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>Influence on the decision</b>	<b>Implication</b>
School director	18 years	Leads the school	Makes final decision taking into consideration the ideas from the curriculum assistant and the teaching director	Has a panoramic view of the school and makes panoramic decisions on curriculum adoption
Curriculum assistant	11 years	Searches for curriculum  Does research on how curriculum, such as language curriculum, can bring students best language acquisition	Provides different aspects on the use of current curriculum  Has access to curriculum documentations on what other schools are doing  Checks the differences among current curriculum, curriculum from other schools and national standards	Provides a CKEG national context  Plays an external role in curriculum adoption
Teaching director	13 years	Works closely with teachers  Has firsthand knowledge of the classroom and the student learning outcomes	Has strong influence on the feedback of how curriculum influences students  Has strong influence on suggestions about how curriculum can be adjusted according to student learning outcomes  Has experience about how curriculum influences teachers' teaching	Provides specific information about student learning outcomes  Provides specific information about teachers  Plays an internal role in curriculum adoption

*Table 4.3* Expertise of Members of the Leadership Team



### **Decision-making about curriculum adoption, implementation and assessment**

The process of curriculum adoption reflects the values of the kindergarten leadership team. The decisions by the kindergarten leadership team include: how to adopt, how to implement, and how to align with students' development. At first, the leadership team members conducted research to identify the curricula that most align with the team's value. Then, the courses were categorized into different subjects, for example, Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum. The second step is adoption. Curriculum materials were adopted depending on the contents and suitability. With the knowledge and experience of school director, teaching director, curriculum assistant, as well as suggestions from teachers and parents, curricula were adopted. The third step is adjustment. Curriculum was adjusted according to the learning outcomes, student progress and teachers' feedback. Usually, how to adjust was discussed during meetings.

Although referring to the 2001 CKEG, the kindergarten leadership team members adopted curriculum more aligned with their own values, which made the curriculum contents much deeper and more meaningful. The ABC leadership team used the CKEG curriculum as a baseline, ensuring that the curriculum meets those standards. The ABC kindergarten leadership team, however, aspired to a higher standard of achievement for students in the ABC kindergarten and expected them to learn more than the basic requirements by CKEG. The decisions made for the curriculum reflected the team's expectations that young children can attain deeper and more meaningful learning in each of the content areas.

### **Five student assessments for one academic year**

Starting from the early years of the kindergarten's existence, the leadership team met

to discuss curriculum. In year one of the formal establishment of the team, they discussed curriculum once per week or every two weeks. In year ten, they exchanged ideas every two weeks or once per month. Now, the kindergarten is 18 years old. The leadership team meets once per month or every two months. The ABC kindergarten leadership team makes an effort to provide proper curriculum so that students can learn with interest and grow healthier.

Below are the five student assessments for the academic year of 2016 to 2017.

Students are assessed five times a year for the three curriculum areas: Chinese Language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum. The assessments are conducted by classroom teachers. They observe the students during oral presentations and take notes with paper and pencil to document student proficiency.

	<b>Chinese language curriculum</b>	<b>English language curriculum</b>	<b>Science curriculum</b>
Student assessment on September 30, 2016	Assess Chinese reading and Chinese character learning.	Assess English vocabulary learning.	Assess interest in learning science.
Student assessment on November 30, 2016	Assess Chinese poetry reading.	Assess English words learning and the ability of reading short paragraph.	Assess science understanding.
Student assessment on February 17, 2017	Assess Chinese language communication and the ability of reading.	Assess the interest to learn English and the ability to read English.	Assess if students can memorize and explain some learned lessons.
Student assessment on April 21, 2017	Assess if students can memorize poetry and write Chinese characters.	Assess the English reading ability of students above five years.	Assess if students can explain some similar phenomena with the knowledge learned.
Student assessment on June 12, 2017	Assess how many Chinese characters students have learn in the academic year, the ability of reading in the year, and the ability of memorizing poetry in the year.	Assess students' interest in learning a foreign language, the ability to communicate with English, and the ability of reading English learned in the academic year.	Assess what students have learned about science in the academic year, how they explain other phenomena with the science knowledge, and their interest in science.

*Table 4.4* Student Assessments

### Student assessment at the end of an academic year

Student assessments are used to inform the leadership team's decision-making. The academic year from this kindergarten is from September to January and from February to July. Every July, before the close of the academic year, there is a meeting to assess the curricula for the previous year. Below is the list of topics discussed at the meeting on July 2017 for assessing the three curricula of the academic year from September 2016 to July 2017.

	<b>Chinese language curriculum</b>	<b>English language curriculum</b>	<b>Science curriculum</b>
Student learning outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have great interest in reading Chinese books and memorizing Chinese poetry.</li> <li>Students can communicate in Chinese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students have interest in learning English.</li> <li>Students experience some difficulty in pronouncing some words.</li> <li>Students can communicate with simple expressions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students show interest in learning science and watching scientific experiments.</li> <li>Students can explain some similar phenomena with the science knowledge learned.</li> </ul>
Alignment with the values of the leadership team	Align with the values from the leadership team for developing advanced language ability for students	Align with the values from the leadership team for developing friendly communication for students	Align with the values from the leadership team for developing thinking habit, vast interest, and different curiosity for students
Discussion for future curriculum implementation	Keep the Chinese language curriculum aligned with the value of advanced language ability.	Watch for English learning outcomes, make adjustments accordingly, and keep it aligned with the value of friendly communication.	Continue to use the science curriculum, put students' interest as a priority, and keep it aligned with the values of thinking habit, vast interest, and different curiosity.

*Table 4.5* Meeting on Three Curriculum Assessments for the Academic Year of 2016 to 2017

At the July meeting, the leadership team discussed the curriculum and the student learning outcomes for the academic year of 2016 to 2017. Curriculum assessment is linked

with decision-making about curriculum concerning student learning outcomes, feedback from teachers, the CKEG standards, and more with the values of the kindergarten leadership team members themselves. The leadership team members assessed the students' interest in reading Chinese and their ability to communicate in Chinese. Their observations reflected teachers' and parents' opinions and informed the team's decision-making that this specific Chinese language curriculum should be continued. Difficulty in pronouncing long words and the ability to communicate with simple words influenced the decision-making that English curriculum may be adjusted or strengthened while aligned with the value of language development. Students' ability to explain some similar science phenomena with the knowledge learned influenced the decision-making that science curriculum should be continued and aligned with the values of kindergarten leadership team: thinking habits, vast interest, and different curiosity.

### **Curriculum decision-making for one academic year**

The kindergarten leadership held six meetings for the academic year of 2016 to 2017. These meeting agendas were chosen because there were curriculum adjustments which reflect the values that inform the team's decision-making.

### **Curriculum Meeting One**

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from September 3, 2016*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Any decisions made</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Meeting on September 3, 2016  (1 Hour)	Chinese language curriculum: Discuss the Chinese language curriculum from the whole picture (20 minutes)	Focus on the learning outcomes of new students.  If new students experiences difficulties in	Each classroom has new students each term. They may be from other kindergartens or new to school such as children of two	Classroom observation  What teachers say about each student

		Chinese language learning, make some adjustments next month.	years. Adjustments may be made according to feedback from teachers or observation.	
	English language curriculum: Discuss the English language curriculum from the whole picture (20 minutes)	Focus on how new students can speak English and how current students can use English.  Make adjustments to English words learning next month if new students find it difficult.	As a foreign language learner, not every student is sensitive. Adjustments can stimulate students' interest to learn English.	Assessment  The feedback from teachers
	Science curriculum: Discuss the science curriculum from the whole picture (20 minutes)	Focus on the interest when students are learning science.  Make adjustment if they find it difficult to understand.	Some science phenomena are not easy to understand. Stimulating interest in science is the most important.	Observation on student

*Table 4.6 Meeting from September 3, 2016*

### **Context**

Curriculum meeting one was at the beginning of the semester, on September 3, 2016.

This was a routine meeting, discussing the curricula from the whole year, in all content areas.

### **Inputs**

The leadership team discussed the Chinese language curriculum, the English language curriculum, and the science curriculum more generally, as specific assessments were not yet available. The generalized data used included classroom observation by teachers and the teaching director, feedback from teachers, and assessment, as well as opinions from parents.

## Process

For English language curriculum, the leadership team considered that not everyone is sensitive to the sounds of a foreign language and complex words are difficult to pronounce. So the decision was made to change the number and types of words presented in the curriculum. The director asked for words to be adjusted so that students can hear words more clearly and read words more clearly. For science curriculum, the discussion considered that some science phenomenon might be a little difficult for students to understand, decision-making was to focus on interest stimulation. Take static electricity for example. Instruction does not focus on the theory of static electricity, it emphasizes the function and the sound of static electricity.

## Product

There were no decisions to make curriculum adjustments as the new year commenced. Decisions were made to focus on the learning outcomes of new students for Chinese language curriculum, to focus on how new students can speak English and how current students can use English for English language curriculum, to focus on their interests when students are learning science for science curriculum. The actual decision was to continue the current curriculum and watch for adjustment.

## Curriculum Meeting Two

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from October 12, 2016*

Date	Topics	Any decisions made	Why	Evidence
Meeting on October 12, 2016  (1 Hour and 20 Minutes)	Chinese language curriculum: Discuss student learning and the necessity for some	Continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum with no changes.	The kindergarten leadership team ascertained that each student showed strong	What teachers said about each student

	adjustments on the Chinese language curriculum (20 minutes)		learning ability and positive attitude in learning Chinese without difficulties.	
	English language curriculum: Discuss student learning and the necessity for some adjustments on the English language curriculum (40 minutes)	Delete some long and difficult words.  Continue to observe the English learning outcomes.	Long words are difficult to pronounce.	Students cannot pronounce some long words clearly.
	Science curriculum: Discuss student learning and the necessity for some adjustment on the science curriculum (20 minutes)	Continue to use the current science curriculum with no changes.	Students seemed to be very interested on each science lesson.	Observation on students

*Table 4.7 Meeting from October 12, 2016*

### **Context**

On September 30, 2016, the leadership team assessed Chinese reading, Chinese character learning, English word learning, and science learning interest using the reports on student learning outcomes written by teachers. From the students' assessments, the team found that students were experiencing some difficulty when pronouncing some long English words. The need for improvement was the reason for holding the subsequent meeting on October 12, 2016 to review the assessments conducted on September 30.

### **Inputs**

There are several sources of "inputs" that the leadership team uses to make decisions. The main input is based on student observations by teachers. For Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum, the leadership team

discussed student learning and the necessity for adjustments on the three curriculum. For Chinese and English curriculum, the data is what teachers said about how each student was progressing in language development. For English curriculum, teachers observed that students cannot pronounce some long words clearly; For science curriculum, the data is the observation of the students that students are very interested in science lessons.

### **Process**

From the discussion at the meeting, the kindergarten leadership team ascertained that each student showed strong learning ability and positive attitude in learning Chinese without difficulties. For English curriculum, they found that long words are difficult to pronounce. For science curriculum, they found that students seemed to be very interested in each science lesson based on teachers' feedback.

### **Product**

The leadership team made the decision to continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum with no change, use the current English curriculum with the change of deleting some long and difficult English words, and continue to use the current science curriculum with no change. To inspire students to learn English and stimulate their interest, the team reached an agreement to add an English learning app called Dict. This app can lead the students to pronounce long words. Although the team deleted some long words, some words which are neither short nor too long can be learned well by students with the help of this app.

The decision-making was based on the values and vision held by the leadership team: students should be willing to communicate with language and should be interested in the



surrounding science phenomena. This curriculum adjustment represents curriculum decision-making by the leadership team. This decision-making reflects the leadership team's values and vision.

### Curriculum Meeting Three

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from December 12, 2016*

Date	Topics	Any decisions made	Why	Evidence
Meeting on December 12, 2016  (1 Hour)	Chinese language curriculum (30 minutes)	Continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum and add more ancient poetry.	Students showed great interest in reading ancient poetry and learning poetry is positive for Chinese language learning.	Observation of students
	English language curriculum (10 minutes)	No change for the current curriculum	Students can speak English with interest, pronounce clearly, and can communicate with simple expressions.	Classroom observation and feedback from teachers
	Science curriculum (20 minutes)	Continue to use the current science curriculum with no changes.  Some lessons in science curriculum are a little difficult for students to understand. But continue to observe students on their learning abilities.	Incomplete understanding does not hinder students' interest in learning science.	Teachers' feedback on each student

*Table 4.8 Meeting from December 12, 2016*

### Context

On November 30, 2016, the leadership team assessed Chinese poetry reading, English words learning, and the ability of science understanding using the reports on student learning

outcomes written by teachers. From the students' assessment, the team found that students expressed more interest in learning Chinese with poetry and could memorize more Chinese characters when learning poetry. This is the reason for holding a meeting on December 12, 2016 to review the assessments conducted on November 30. The discussion at this meeting included evaluation of whether those corrections to the curriculum were productive. The team determined that the adjustments to the curriculum improved student engagement with all three content areas.

### **Inputs**

The kindergarten leadership team regarded observation of students as the data for Chinese curriculum discussion, classroom observation and feedback from teachers as the data for English curriculum discussion, and teachers' feedback on each student as the data for science curriculum discussion.

### **Process**

The decision-making for Chinese curriculum happened because the team found that students showed great interest in reading ancient poetry and learning poetry is positive for Chinese language learning. The decision-making for English curriculum happened because the team found that students could speak English with interest, pronounce clearly, and could communicate with simple expressions. The decision-making for science curriculum happened because the team found that incomplete understanding did not hinder students' interest in learning science.

### **Product**

The leadership team made the decision to add more Chinese ancient poetry, make no

change for English curriculum, and continue to observe students on science learning. With the consensus by the three leadership team members, the decision was made to add an app called Rhyme Duoduo to the Chinese curriculum. This app can read rhymes and poetry. With this app, students were expressing more interest in reading poetry and learning Chinese.

The decision-making was based on the values and vision of the kindergarten leadership team: students should recognize objects and develop literacy simultaneously. This curriculum adjustment represents curriculum decision-making by the leadership team. This decision-making reflects the leadership team's values and vision.

### Curriculum Meeting Four

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from February 21, 2017*

Date	Topics	Any decisions made	Why	Evidence
Meeting on February 21, 2017  (1 Hour)	Chinese language curriculum (10 minutes)	No change about the Chinese language curriculum	Students in each classroom show strong language development without much difficulties.	Observation on students
	English language curriculum (30 minutes)	No change for current curriculum	Students can speak English with interest, pronounce clearly, and can communicate with some expressions.	Classroom observation and feedback from teachers
	Science curriculum (20 minutes)	Continue to use the current science curriculum with no change.	Students can explain some daily phenomenon after learning the science curriculum.	Teachers' feedback on each student

*Table 4.9 Meeting from February 21, 2017*

### Context

On February 17, 2017, Chinese language communication, the ability to read English

and students' understanding about science were assessed using the reports on student learning outcome written by teachers. This is the reason for holding a meeting on February 21, 2017 to review the assessment to conducted on February 17.

### **Inputs**

The team took observations on students as the data for Chinese curriculum adjustments, classroom observation and feedback from teachers as the data for English curriculum adjustment, and teachers' feedback on each student as the data for science curriculum adjustment.

### **Process**

On February 21st, the team discussed that students in each classroom showed strong Chinese language development without much difficulty; noted that students can speak English with interest, pronounce clearly, and can communicate with some expressions; and found that students can explain some daily phenomenon after learning the science curriculum.

### **Product**

The leadership team decided to make no change on the Chinese language curriculum, no change on the English language curriculum, and continue to use the current science curriculum with no change.

The decision-making is based on the values and vision of the kindergarten leadership team: students should learn with interest and learn in the environment. This means that interest is the most important in classroom learning, as long as they are willing to communicate and willing to explore science. This curriculum adjustment represents

curriculum decision-making by the leadership team. This decision-making reflects the leadership team's values and vision.

### Curriculum Meeting Five

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from April 27, 2017*

Date	Topics	Any decisions made	Why	Evidence
Meeting on April 27, 2017  (1 Hour)	Chinese language curriculum (10 minutes)	Continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum	The progress of student learning in Chinese prove that the curriculum is effective.	Observation on students
	English language curriculum (30 minutes)	Add some longer reading for the students above five years so they can perform in July.	Students perform in July in front of parents and teachers to show what they have learned in the years.	The yearly performance
	Science curriculum (20 minutes)	Continue to use the current science curriculum with no change.	Students continue to show ability to explain some daily phenomenon after learning the science curriculum.	Teachers' feedback on each student

*Table 4.10 Meeting from April 27, 2017*

### Context

On April 21, 2017, the leadership team assessed if students could memorize poetry and write Chinese characters, the English reading ability of students above five years, and if students can explain some similar phenomena with the knowledge learned in the science curriculum. The reason for holding a meeting on April 27, 2017 was to review the assessments conducted on April 21.

**Inputs**

Teacher observation of students was the data for Chinese curriculum adjustment; a written yearly performance was the data for English curriculum adjustment; teachers' feedback on each student's engagement with learning science phenomena was the data for science curriculum adjustment.

**Process**

Through the meeting discussions, the team found there was progress of student learning in the Chinese language. The progress in student learning in Chinese proved that the curriculum is effective. For English curriculum, since there was a performance in July in front of parents and teachers to show what they have learned in the year, decision-making for curriculum adjustment was needed. For science curriculum, the team found that students continue to show ability to explain some daily phenomenon after learning the science curriculum.

**Product**

The kindergarten leadership team made the decision to continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum, add some longer English reading for the students above five years, and continue to use the current science curriculum.

The decision-making is based on the values and vision of the kindergarten leadership team: students should read more and explore more. This curriculum adjustment represents curriculum decision-making by the leadership team. This decision-making reflects the leadership team's values and vision.

## Curriculum Meeting Six

*Chart of the leadership team's meeting from June 20, 2017*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Any decisions made</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Meeting on June 20, 2017  (2 Hours)	Chinese language curriculum: Make conclusions about the curriculum for the academic year (40 minutes)	Continue to use the current language curriculum including the changes  Watch for the need of adjustments next semester	The progress of student learning in Chinese prove that the curriculum is effective.	Observation on students
	English language curriculum: Make conclusion of the curriculum for the academic year (40 minutes)	Continue to use the current language curriculum including the changes  Watch for the need of adjustments next semester	Students can speak well and communicate well. The curriculum is useful.	Observation on students
	Science curriculum: Make conclusion of the curriculum for the academic year (40 minutes)	Continue to use the current science curriculum	Students show great interest in learning science.	Assessment

*Table 4.11 Meeting from June 20, 2017*

### Context

On June 12, 2017, the content assessed for the Chinese curriculum were how many Chinese characters students have learned in the academic year, the improvement in students' ability to read in the year, and the ability of students to memorize poetry in the year. What was assessed for English curriculum were students' interest in learning a foreign language, the ability to communicate with English, and the ability of reading English books in the academic year. What was assessed for science curriculum were what students have learned about science in the academic year, how they explain other phenomena with the science

knowledge, and their interest in science. Review of these assessments conducted on June 12 is the reason for holding a meeting on June 20, 2017.

### **Inputs**

The data for Chinese curriculum and English curriculum were observations of students. For science curriculum, the data were written student assessments.

### **Process**

From the meeting discussion, notes indicate the team found that the progress of student learning in Chinese proved that the curriculum is effective, students can speak well and communicate well in English, and students show great interest in learning science.

### **Product**

The leadership team made the decision to continue to use the current Chinese language curriculum, continue to use the current English language curriculum, and continue to use the current science curriculum.

The decision-making was based on the values and vision of the kindergarten leadership team: students should be developed at all fields such as language and science. This curriculum adjustment represents curriculum decision-making by the leadership team. This decision-making reflects the leadership team's values and vision.

### **Analysis of the values that guide the decision-making process**

CKEG is the foundation for kindergarten curriculum adoption. The leadership team's values are to deepen and extend the contents of the curriculum, using their values to inform their decisions to make students learn more as well as be interested in more.



## Curriculum alignment to national standards

Chinese language, English language, and science are the core curricula of this kindergarten, which were adopted using the CKEG standards as a baseline and developing greater depth and meaning reflecting the values of the kindergarten leadership team members themselves. The following chart, emphasizing on Chinese language curriculum and English language curriculum as well as science curriculum, shows the relationship of the ABC kindergarten curriculum to the CKEG requirements on curriculum.

*Relationship of ABC Kindergarten Curriculum to the CKEG Requirements on Curriculum*

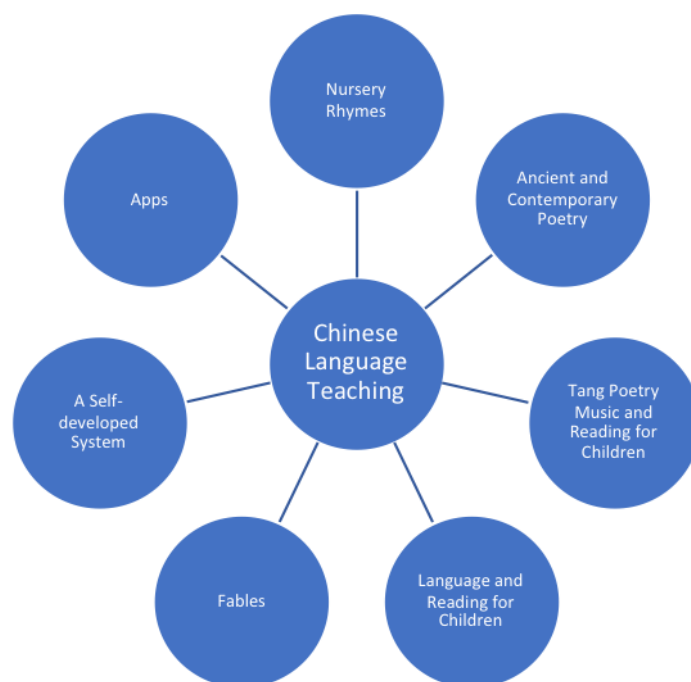
	<b>CKEG</b>	<b>ABC kindergarten</b>
Chinese language curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CKEG requires that language curriculum should make students willing to learn language, willing to communicate, willing to read books.</li> <li>• CKEG does not require advanced language ability</li> <li>• CKEG does not specify the instruction steps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chinese language in ABC kindergarten not only makes students willing to communicate and read, but also adopts certain language materials for specific language learning and reading.</li> <li>• Chinese language in ABC kindergarten requires students to have advanced language ability after years of study.</li> <li>• Chinese language in ABC kindergarten specifies the instruction steps in each lesson.</li> </ul>
English language curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CKEG does not indicate certain foreign language to learn.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABC kindergarten adopts English as a foreign language and teaches students to ensure they have the ability to communicate and read in English.</li> </ul>
Science curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CKEG requires that science curriculum should stimulate students' interest in science and make them willing to explore.</li> <li>• Students can learn from life and games the quantitative relations of objects</li> <li>• CKEG does not specify the instruction steps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science curriculum in ABC kindergarten not only makes students interested in science exploration, but also encourages students to do the science experiments themselves.</li> <li>• Science curriculum in ABC kindergarten strongly connects math concepts when students are learning science.</li> <li>• Science curriculum in ABC kindergarten specifies the instruction steps in each lesson.</li> </ul>

*Table 4.12* Relationship of ABC Kindergarten Curriculum to CKEG Curriculum

### The Chinese language curriculum of the ABC kindergarten

The details of the Chinese language curriculum of the ABC kindergarten are in the following chart. The explanation of the Chinese language curriculum is in Appendix D.

*Graphic representation of the adopted Chinese curriculum of the ABC kindergarten version*



*Figure 4.1* The Chinese Language Curriculum

*Chart with strand (Chinese curriculum), time, decision, next steps*

	<b>Time when this curriculum was established</b>	<b>Decisions made that led to their adoption and implementation</b>	<b>Next steps for refining or changing</b>
Nursery Rhymes	October, 1999	The school director wrote these nursery rhymes herself and made decision to implement it.	Continue to adopt the nursery rhymes.
Ancient and Contemporary Poetry	October, 1999	The school director selected some ancient and contemporary poetry and put them into the Chinese language curriculum.	Continue to adopt the ancient and contemporary poetry.
Tang Poetry Music and Reading for Children	February, 2006	The teaching director discussed with the school director about student learning outcomes. They found music is helpful in learning poetry and Chinese. Decision was	Continue integrating poetry with music. Add more suitable music with the language learning.

		made that Tang poetry music and reading is added to the Chinese language curriculum.	
Language and Reading for Children	September, 2008	The curriculum assistant suggested that more reading is helpful for students to learn language and searched for more reading curriculum. With discussion and opinions from the teaching director about Chinese learning outcomes from classroom, the school director made the decision to adopt additional language and reading materials for students.	Continue strengthening students' reading ability.
Fables	February, 2011	The school director made decision to add fables to the Chinese language curriculum with the opinion by the curriculum assistant that fable is the curriculum in many kindergartens and the opinion by the teaching director that fables are helpful for students to grow.	Search for more fables that are meaningful to students.
A self-developed system	July, 2011	The school director suggested that a simple system integrating these curricula may be needed for better language instruction and management. With the curriculum assistant and the teaching director, the system was developed.	Better the system.
App: The Chinese learning app "Baby Learning Pinyin and Chinese Characters"	June, 2015	With the fast developing technology, the three kindergarten team members reached agreement on introducing this app as a supplementary instruction tool for learning Pinyin and Chinese characters.	Keep using this app.
App: The story learning app "Baby Story"	June, 2015	With the fast developing technology, the three kindergarten team members reached agreement on introducing this app as a supplementary instruction tool for story listening.	Keep using this app.
App: The rhyme app	December, 2016	The team found that students expressed more interest in learning	Keep using this app and search for more

“Rhyme Duoduo”		Chinese with poetry. With the consensus by the three leadership team members, decision was made to add an app called Rhyme Duoduo.	apps.
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*Table 4.13* Decision-making on the Chinese Language Curriculum

### **Values that guide Chinese language curriculum**

The four V’s concept (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describes a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10).

The adoption of and refinements to kindergarten’s Chinese language curriculum represents the decision-making process by the leadership team.

#### **Values**

Values reflect meaning and purpose (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). While referring to the CKEG national standards concerning language curriculum, the leadership team members then consider their own values and then try to deepen and make more meaningful student learning by expecting that students develop thinking habits and advanced language ability. When they make curriculum adoption decisions, their own values drive the decisions. The curriculum they adopted emphasized students’ thinking habits and advanced language ability.

#### **Vision**

Vision operationalizes the value set (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The vision from the kindergarten leadership team is operationalized by their values. The vision held by the leadership team on Chinese language curriculum is early reading.

### *Description about Chinese language curriculum adoption and modification*

According to the children's psychological characteristics, the kindergarten leadership team uses activity literacy, game literacy, scenario literacy, and reading literacy, so that children can recognize objects and develop literacy simultaneously, speak and read simultaneously, and can read extensively after three years of study.

According to the knowledge and philosophy of the kindergarten leadership team, the languages of humans are categorized as auditory language and visual language. Auditory language is a language that stimulates brain recognition at first. Visual language is a language refined to become regular, systematic, deep and beautiful. The Chinese characters are pictographic characters, which stem from pictures that present certain objects, meanings and thoughts. Students can be greatly stimulated for learning, for thinking, as well as for memory strengthening. Therefore, from the leadership team's concern, students should listen to nursery rhymes and poetry, and read poetry and short and beautiful contemporary articles. The kindergarten leadership team adopts Chinese language curriculum and makes adjustments with the belief the curriculum will equip students with attention ability, observation ability, memory ability, imagination ability, and thinking ability.

The curriculum Language and Reading for Children added in 2008 integrates "categorized literacy" designed by the leadership team. Categorized literacy means that teacher first puts different Chinese characters made with different kinds of colors or with different kinds of shapes in a big basket, then gives students several small baskets and asks them to put the characters in the small baskets according to the teacher's instruction. The first time is categorization by color, the second time is categorization by shape, the third time is

categorization by size, and the fourth time is categorization by type. This greatly stimulates the students' interest in Chinese language learning.

### **Vectors**

Vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). According to the philosophy and experience that the kindergarten leadership team holds on literacy and reading, there are eight principles that lead to effective language learning. This curriculum intellectual property reflects the team's adage of *aspiration, desperation, perspiration and inspiration*.

#### *Principles that guide the decision-making*

- Principle of Acquired Sensitivity (Direction of Acquired Sensitivity)

It is necessary to ensure students learn the words as early as possible. When students are playing, give the students books; when students are sitting, give the students books. Students will have *acquired sensitivity* after some time. They will like watching the characters and form the habit of reading. The students with *acquired sensitivity* will like reading more compared to interest to other objects, moreover, they will actively ask questions.

- Principle of Environment Classroom (Direction of Environment Classroom)

Literacy will naturally reflect the environment in which students are living. Words students are learning should be the words that are connected with the objects that students most frequently touch, such as cat, trees, and car. If the students experience something, the relevant words should be taught immediately. For example, if it rains, "rain" in Chinese and English should be immediately taught to students. Kindergarten literacy

cannot be taught the same way as language teaching in primary school. Kindergarten literacy can only be taught in the *environment classroom*.

- Principle of Hearing and Seeing (Direction of Hearing and Seeing)

A student's habit is influenced by the surrounding people and objects and their ways of language, behavior, and relationship. Classrooms should be decorated with words in Chinese and English, rhymes, and poetry. Teachers should read to behave as examples. Then, students start to imitate reading, forming the interest of learning oral language and written language from what they *hear and see*.

- Principle of Habit Formation (Direction of Habit Formation)

Habit is necessary to all kinds of learning. Literacy and reading cannot be carried out without sound habits. Students should *form habits* such as persistence and concentration to learn literacy and reading. Literacy and reading should not only be with interest, but also with arrangement.

- Principle of Gradual Comprehension (Direction of Gradual Comprehension)

Kindergarten literacy cannot require students to understand the word sound, word shape, word meaning, and word writing simultaneously. The process of literacy is from blur impressions to clear impressions to word analysis, from sound to shape to meaning, and how to write. The point of literacy is that teaching should be continuous with various kinds of methods, with the concern of students' *gradual comprehension*.

- Principle of Joyful Games (Direction of Joyful Games)

Literacy and reading should be with *joyful games*, which stimulate students' interest to learn this time and to hope to learn next time. The emotion of learning should be with

students to engage them in learning positively rather than being asked to learn by their teachers. Also, teachers should read aloud in front of students to let students feel the joyful learning atmosphere.

- Principle of Encouragement and Praise (Direction of Encouragement and Praise)

Teachers should *encourage and praise* students when they are learning words and reading. Students cannot be criticized if they are not performing well. The number of words a student can learn should not be used to evaluate the student. Students' attitude towards learning is the way to evaluate student learning outcomes and teaching quality. The desire to learn as well as the interest to learn is the goal of language learning.

- Principle of Entirety Recognition (Direction of Entirety Recognition)

Kindergarten students learn language from accepting objects *entirely*, impressively, blurrily to making analyses comprehensively. When reading, students should first read the whole article, then study the new words with reviewing the old words; when learning words, students should first have some impression of what the word looks like, then analyze the word structure.

Below is how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions to adopt lessons for Language and Reading for Children as part of the Chinese language curriculum. These lessons were searched, designed, and adopted as a small book. The lessons in the book can be changed.



*Chart of the Chinese language curriculum (Language and Reading for Children) with topics, purposes, and principles*

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Principles</b>
Literacy with cards which integrate words and pictures	Make students learn words, connect the meaning with picture.	Principle of Acquired Sensitivity Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Entirety Recognition
Literacy with Games	Stimulate students' literacy interest with games	Principle of Acquired Sensitivity Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Joyful Games
Text: Spotted Deer	Encourage students to read aloud, learn new words, and pronounce accurately.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Entirety Recognition
Text: Seasons Song	Encourage students to read aloud, learn new words, and pronounce accurately. Make students understand the basic characteristics of the four seasons.	Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Entirety Recognition
Text: Tortoise Bridge	Make students feel the spirit of cooperation and sharing. Encourage them to reiterate the story in front of classmates.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Encouragement and Praise Principle of Entirety Recognition
Text: Monkeys fishing the Moon	Make students use long sentences to describe meanings. Learn the new words in the article and read aloud.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Entirety Recognition
Text: Cradle	Make students feel the love of mother. Encourage students to read with passion.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Gradual Comprehension Principle of Encouragement and Praise Principle of Entirety Recognition
Text: Leaf	Encourage students to read aloud. Stimulate students' imagination.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Gradual Comprehension Principle of Encouragement and Praise Principle of Entirety Recognition

*Table 4.14* Decision-making from the Kindergarten Leadership Team for Adopting Lessons for Language and Reading for Children as Part of the Chinese Language Curriculum

Below is how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions to adopt lessons for Fable as part of the Chinese language curriculum. These lessons are searched, designed, and adopted as a small book. The lessons in the book can be changed.

*Chart of the Chinese language curriculum (Fable) with topics, purposes, and principles*

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Principles</b>
Race between Tortoise and Rabbit	Make students read the article accurately and teach students not to be proud.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Gradual Comprehension
Rabbits	Know the words in the articles and teach students how to cope with emergencies.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Gradual Comprehension
Zebra	Make students know zebra and make students love animals.	Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Gradual Comprehension
Tadpoles looking for Mother	Encourage students to read aloud, remember the characters in the article, and know the connection between tadpole and frog.	Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Joyful Games Principle of Gradual Comprehension
Earthworm and Seed	Encourage students to read aloud. Make students love animals and plants.	Principle of Environment Classroom Principle of Joyful Games Principle of Gradual Comprehension
Water with Basket	Encourage students to read aloud. Make students know the implication.	Principle of Hearing and Seeing Principle of Joyful Games Principle of Gradual Comprehension

*Table 4.15* Decision-making from the Kindergarten Leadership Team for Adopting Lessons for Fables as Part of the Chinese Language Curriculum

The values, vision, vectors and voice of the ABC kindergarten leadership team members made them add more to the Chinese language curriculum besides the CKEG standards on language. Literacy with cards, literacy with games, text reading, text reiteration, story performance, fables, and poetry are what the kindergarten leadership team made decisions to add to the Chinese language curriculum. The lesson “Spotted Deer” is illustrated below as an example of how the kindergarten leadership team designed and adopted materials as a lesson for the Chinese language curriculum.

*Example lesson: Spotted Deer*

- Curriculum Goals (Vision):

Students know and understand basic characteristics of spotted deer;

Students read aloud and pronounce accurately;

Students are interested in performing the reading of short articles.

- Curriculum Emphases (Values):

Advanced language ability

- Curriculum Preparation:

A big picture of spotted deer, the text written on blackboard, a card with the character “deer” on it, a card with the character “run” on it.

- Curriculum Process (Vectors):

### **1. Introduction**

Teacher reads the article and lets students guess what it is;

Teacher shows the picture of spotted deer, asks students to observe, and encourages students to discuss with each other;

Teacher describes the characteristics of spotted deer.

### **2. Students read (*Principle of Entirety Recognition*)**

Students read after teacher for three times following teacher’s performance.

### **3. Cards (*Principle of Hearing and Seeing*)**

Give the two cards to each student and let them learn with games.

### **4. Read after teacher (*Principle of Entirety Recognition*)**

Students read after teacher by looking at the blackboard.

### **5. Performance (*Principle of Entirety Recognition*)**

Students read aloud with imaginary performance.

### **6. Cards again (*Principle of Hearing and Seeing*)**

Students learn the Chinese characters with cards again.

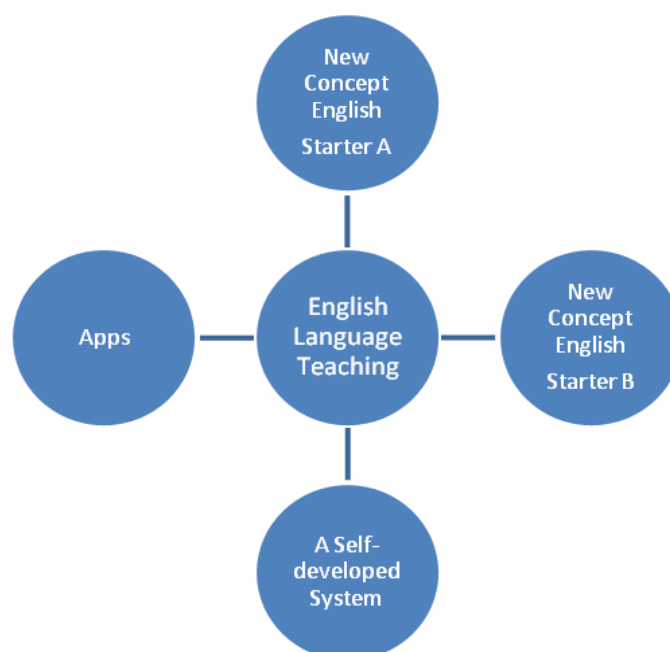
## 7. Extension

Students discuss freely with each other about the spotted deer and other animals they have seen in zoos.

### The English language curriculum of the ABC kindergarten

For English language, the kindergarten adopts the English books New Concept English Starter A and Starter B, the self-developed system and apps. Apps for English teaching are the ABC learning app “Baby learning ABC” and the English learning app “Dict”. These are adopted as additional teaching methods for English instruction.

*Graphic representation of the adopted English curriculum of the ABC kindergarten version*



*Figure 4.2* The English Language Curriculum

The forty-five lessons continue the excellent way of English teaching, giving the children more expressions, more words and stimulating more interest. After learning Starter B, students can almost communicate with common expressions and can write common sentences with great interest. (See Appendix E)

*Chart with strand (English curriculum), time, decision, next steps*

	<b>Time when this curriculum was established</b>	<b>Decisions made that led to their adoption and implementation</b>	<b>Next steps for refining or changing</b>
New Concept English Starter A	September, 2010	The school director worked with the curriculum assistant and the teaching director in the early months of 2010 for the suitability of this book, then made decision to use this book as the English curriculum for age 2 to age 4.	Continue to adopt the New Concept English Starter A as the curriculum for students from age 2 to age 4.
New Concept English Starter B	February, 2011	The school director worked with the curriculum assistant and the teaching director for the suitability of Starter B for age 4 to age 6 after Starter A was adopted, then made decision to use Starter B as the English curriculum for students from age 4 to age 6.	Continue to adopt the New Concept English Starter B as the curriculum for students from age 4 to age 6.
A self-developed system	July, 2011	The school director suggested that a simple system integrating these curricula may be needed for better language instruction and management. With the curriculum assistant and the teaching director, the system was developed.	Better the system.
App: The ABC learning app “Baby learning ABC”	June, 2015	With the fast developing technology, the three kindergarten team members reached agreement on introducing this app as a supplementary instruction tool for learning the ABC.	Continue using this app.
App: The English learning app “Dict”	October, 2016	The team found that students were experiencing some difficulty when pronouncing some long English words. The team made the decision to delete some long words and to add an English learning app called Dict.	Continue using this app.

*Table 4.16* Decision-making on the English Language Curriculum

## **Values that guide English language curriculum**

The four V's concept (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describes a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10).

The kindergarten's English language curriculum represents the decision-making process by the leadership team.

### **Values**

Values reflect meaning and purpose (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). Although CKEG does not have foreign language learning requirements, the kindergarten leadership team members adopted English learning as foreign language study, which is driven by their own values: Students should develop advanced language ability and friendly communication. The curriculum they adopted emphasized students' thinking habits and advanced language ability, making sure students have the ability to communicate in English fluently and read English books fluently.

### **Vision**

Vision operationalizes the value set (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The vision from the kindergarten leadership team is operationalized by their values. The vision held by the leadership team on English language curriculum is early foreign language study. According to the vision, children are taught and encouraged to memorize letters, words and sentences happily, interestingly and quickly, gradually developing the habit of and the ability to communicate in English and read English books.

## Vectors

Vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). According to the knowledge and philosophy of the kindergarten leadership team, English cannot be taught in the way of Chinese instruction, as it is a second language. Students find that English is more difficult to learn and remember. More encouragement is needed and difficult pronunciation should be avoided. Also, other teaching methods are added in the New Concept English instruction: Integrate learning letters with objects (connect the twenty-six letters with interesting objects), integrate learning words with stories (connect the sequence of letters in a word with a story), integrate instruction with games (high level of interaction between teachers and students), and avoid setbacks during long word pronunciation (change or delete long and difficult words if most students cannot pronounce well). The New Concept English Starter A and Starter B are two books with the lessons written well. The lessons in the books are not collected by the kindergarten leadership team, therefore, the lessons cannot be changed. As a result, there is no table detailing how to select lessons as the tables above on selecting Chinese lessons.

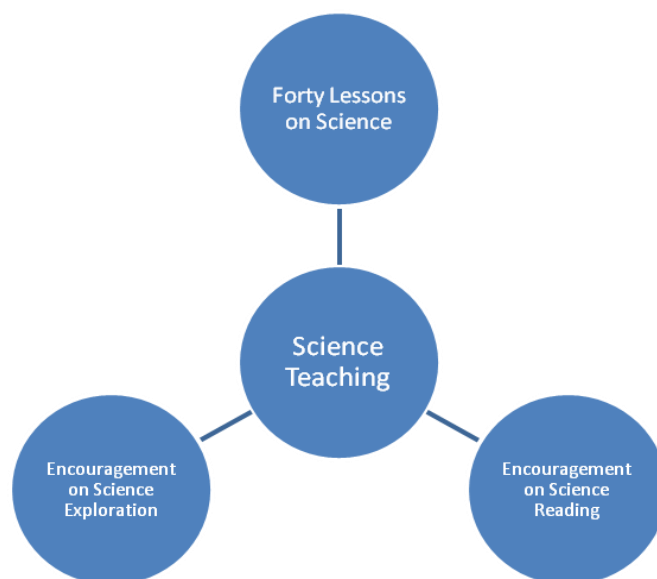
The values, vision, vectors and voice of the ABC kindergarten leadership team members guided them to add more to the English language curriculum besides the CKEG standards on language. For example, when students are learning first several lessons on New Concept English Starter A, the leadership team designs a teaching method that the letters are connected with interesting objects for interest stimulation. When students begin to learn short words, the sequence of letters in a word is connected with a certain interest story. Students are not forced to remember words that they don't want to remember. The kindergarten leadership

team often changes or deletes difficult words and watches for other adjustments needed.

### **The Science Curriculum of the ABC kindergarten**

The curriculum of science was adopted by the leadership team to stimulate the interest of students on science. The science curriculum is for age 3 to age 6 with forty lessons.

*Graphic representation of the adopted Science curriculum of the ABC kindergarten version*



*Figure 4.3* The Science Curriculum

From these forty lessons, students can learn common science concepts, extend their understanding of science, and have greater interest in science in the future. (See appendix F)

*Chart with strand (science curriculum), time, decision, next steps*

	<b>Time when this curriculum was established</b>	<b>Decisions made that led to their adoption and implementation</b>	<b>Next steps for refining or changing</b>
Enlightenment of Science	October, 2007	The three team members reached consensus that science is very important for students to know the world. Decision was made to add science to curriculum to stimulate students' interest.	Continue using the science curriculum. Search for more phenomena that can be easily represented and explained in front of students.

*Table 4.17* Decision-making on the Science Curriculum



## **Values that guide the science curriculum**

The four V's concept (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describe a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10).

The adoption and adjustments of science curriculum represent the decision-making process by the leadership team.

### **Values**

Values reflect meaning and purpose (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The kindergarten leadership team holds values from the CKEG national standard concerning the science curriculum: With science curriculum, children can learn from life and games the quantitative relations of objects and can recognize the importance and interest of math. Also, the kindergarten leadership team holds their own values about science curriculum: Students should develop thinking habits, develop vast interests, and become curious about different things. The science curriculum from the ABC kindergarten integrates science and math, and has specific steps in the science instruction.

### **Vision**

Vision operationalizes the value set (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The vision from the kindergarten leadership team is operationalized by their values. The vision held by the leadership team on science curriculum is early mathematics. According to this vision, this kindergarten emphasizes mathematics education mainly on interest and on game learning with science. The ABC kindergarten leadership team adopted a science curriculum for

students to specify the abstract concepts and develop the way of abstract thinking. Science curriculum, which allows students to touch specific objects and can gradually help students recognize abstract numbers. In this way, students gradually use their abstract thinking to understand the concept of numbers, the concept of space, and the concept of time.

### **Vectors**

Vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). According to the knowledge and philosophy of the kindergarten leadership team, early mathematics cannot be taught the way math instruction is taught in primary school.

Kindergarten mathematics needs to be instructed with interest stimulation and be integrated with science. Mathematics is the foundation of all science and science stimulates the interest of math learning. There are five principles that the kindergarten leadership team holds for adopting the science curriculum.

#### *Principles that guide the decision-making*

- Principle of Sensory Training (Direction of Sensory Training)

Vision: color, shape, objects

Audition: sound, music, voice

Olfactory: smell food, smell drink

Gustation: taste food, taste drink

Touch: objects, texture

- Principle of Counting (Direction of Counting)

In the science lessons, students should be encouraged to count the number of specific objects. For example: How many bottles are there in the science experiment? In daily

activities, students should also be encouraged to count objects around where they live. For example: How many chairs are there in the house? How many windows are there in the house? This will make students form a concept: Numbers can be used to depict the amount of object.

- Principle of Science Enlightenment (Direction of Science Enlightenment)

Students' interest in science should be stimulated at an early age to encourage eager science exploration in the future. The experiments by teachers and the experiments carried out by students themselves can ensure students love science and love the surrounding environment.

- Principle of Geometry Learning (Direction of Geometry Learning)

Kindergarten students should learn the shape of object as early as possible, forming the concept that shapes can be depicted with specific terms such as square, rectangle, triangle, parallelogram, trapezoid, rhombus, circle, semicircle, sphere, cylinder, and cone. Usually, these terms are taught with the objects used in science experiments.

- Principle of Logic Formation (Direction of Logic Formation)

Students can form a simple concept of what logic is when watching the science experiments. Through the explanation from teachers, students can learn that the experiment result is reached through procedures that are carried out step by step, which makes students learn ways of logical thinking.

Below are the purposes and principles that guided the kindergarten leadership team's decision to adopt the first twenty lessons for the science curriculum:

*Chart of the science curriculum with topics, purposes, and principles*

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Principles</b>
Lesson One: Why the newspaper has electricity	Stimulate students' interest in electricity. Learn the shape of newspaper. Count the number of newspapers.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Two: Stick in the water	Stimulate students' interest in absorption. Learn the shape of stick. Count the number of sticks.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Three: The bottle eats the egg	Stimulate students' interest in heat and temperature. Learn the shape of bottle. Count the number of bottles.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Four: The separation of pepper powder and salt	Stimulate students' interest in electrostatic. Recognize, smell and touch pepper powder and salt.	Principle of Sensory Training Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Five: The electrical balloon	Stimulate students' interest in electrostatic. Learn the shape of balloon. Count the number of balloons.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Six: The lovely water imprint	Stimulate students' interest in watermark. Learn the shape of circles.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Seven: Separation and gathering of water flow	Stimulate students' interest in water movement.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Eight: Floating needle	Stimulate students' interest in flotation. Learn the shape of needle. Count the number of needles.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Nine: Thick paper with holes can hold water	Stimulate students' interest in atmospheric pressure. Learn the shape of a hole. Count the number of holes.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Ten: Plastic plate cannot fall	Stimulate students' interest in atmospheric pressure. Learn the shape of a plate. Count the number of plates.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Eleven: The shining candle	Stimulate students' interest in pressure. Learn the shape of a candle.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment

	Count the number of candles.	Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Twelve: Candle water pump	Give students an example on the application of pressure.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Thirteen: Blow the balloon inside the bottle	Encourage students' thinking on how the pressure works.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Fourteen: The cup that can catch the balloon	Encourage students to do experiments with the knowledge of pressure.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Fifteen: The cup that can absorb water	Teach students the knowledge about oxygen. Learn the shape of a cup. Count the number of cups.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Sixteen: The shrunken bottle	Teach students pressure difference.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Seventeen: The table-tennis that can jump far	Encourage students to explain this phenomenon. Learn the shape of table-tennis. Count the number of table-tennis.	Principle of Counting Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Eighteen: The bottle that can blow bubble	Encourage students to explain this phenomenon with the knowledge of pressure. Learn the shape of bubble.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Geometry Learning Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Nineteen: Interesting plant roots	Teach students the structure of plant.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation
Lesson Twenty: Flowing water	Teaching students the characteristics of water.	Principle of Science Enlightenment Principle of Logic Formation

*Table 4.18* Decision-making from the Kindergarten Leadership Team to Adopt the First Twenty Lessons for the Science Curriculum

The values, vision, vectors and voice of the ABC kindergarten leadership team members led them to design the science curriculum with their perspectives: students' thinking habits, vast interests, and different curiosity. The forty lessons in the science curriculum were searched, adopted, designed and evaluated according to the emphasis of each lesson, which reflects the decision-making for curriculum adoption. The lesson "Why the newspaper has electricity" is illustrated below as an example of how the kindergarten leadership team

designed and adopted materials as a lesson for the science curriculum.

*Example lesson: Why the newspaper has electricity*

- Curriculum Goals (Vision):

Stimulate the students' interest in science exploration;

Learn the geometry shape of newspaper;

Count the number of newspapers.

- Curriculum Emphases (Values):

Science interest, thinking habits

- Curriculum Preparation:

One pencil for each student, one newspaper for each student.

- Curriculum Process (Vectors):

### **1. Introduction**

Teacher asks students: Newspaper can be attached to wall without the use of glue, can you guess why?

### **2. Teacher shows the process (*Principle of Science Enlightenment*)**

Teacher puts the newspaper on the wall and uses a pencil to swiftly swipe the newspaper. After that, the newspaper can be attached to the wall. Slowly detach the newspaper from the wall, there may be sound.

### **3. Teacher explains the phenomenon (*Principle of Science Enlightenment*)**

Swiping the pencil on the newspaper makes the newspaper have electricity which is electrostatic. With electrostatic, the newspaper can be attached to the wall. When detaching the newspaper from the wall, there will be an electrostatic sound when the air is dry,

especially in winter.

**4. Students do the experiment themselves (*Principle of Logic Formation, Principle of Science Enlightenment*)**

Students do the experiment by themselves with the help from teacher, showing students the concept that science needs to be carried out step by step (logically).

Group students and students do the experiment with teamwork, showing students the concept that science needs teamwork.

**5. Count the newspapers (*Principle of Counting*)**

Students count the newspapers they have in group.

**6. Learn the shape of newspaper (*Principle of Geometry Learning*)**

Teacher teaches students that the shape of newspaper is rectangle; when folded, the shape is also a rectangle.

**7. Extension**

Encourage students to do the experiment with parents; encourage students to explain to parents electrostatic and rectangle.

**Summary**

In this research, curriculum evaluation, adoption and implementation was analyzed using the CIPP framework and the four V's framework. The CIPP was applied for analyzing decision-making during the curriculum meetings and the four V's framework was applied for the analysis of the decision-making process.

In CIPP, "C" means context, "I" means inputs, "P" means process, and the next "P" means product. When analyzing the six meetings, context referred to student assessments and

the reasons for holding the meeting, inputs referred to the materials and information used for discussion, process referred to how the leadership team made decisions, and product referred to the decision-makings at meetings about curriculum adoption and adjustment.

Fairholm (2009) proposed that strategic planning is for the management domain, while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain. Thinking and planning are different, just as leadership and management are different. The four V's concept (values, vision, vectors, and voice) describes a framework where values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the values set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). In the next section, the researcher used the four V's from Fairholm to analyze the leadership team's strategic planning and strategic thinking.

## **Values**

Strategic planning and thinking lead to identification of commonly held values which reflect meaning and purpose. The team indicated concern about the students' learning from the perspectives of health, language, sociality, science and art, which are the five fields proposed by the 2001 CKEG national standards. However, the kindergarten leadership team members have their own values which are built on the CKEG requirements but are more extensive: students should develop thinking habits, develop vast interests, become curious about different things, develop advanced language ability, as well as form positive characteristics, friendly communication, polite attitude, and confidence. Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum and science curriculum are considered by the leadership team as a priority. The kindergarten leadership team uses activity literacy, game



literacy, scenario literacy, and reading literacy in Chinese language curriculum to help students recognize objects and develop literacy simultaneously as well as speak and read simultaneously. For English language curriculum, the kindergarten leadership team requires students to memorize letters, word and sentences, as well as help students develop the habit of and the ability to read English books. Also, the kindergarten leadership team encourages students to participate in science activities and make effort with teamwork in science lessons.

Values reflect meaning and purpose (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). These values are operationalized by the vision of the kindergarten leadership team members.

### **Vision**

Strategic planning and thinking are necessary for the development and enactment of vision. Vision is necessary before values can be operationalized. The vision that the kindergarten leadership team holds is early reading, early foreign language study, early mathematics, and early arts training. They are the essential part of the kindergarten curriculum.

Chinese language curriculum - The languages of humans are categorized as auditory language and visual language. Auditory language is a language that stimulates brain recognition at first. Visual language is a language that is refined, regular, systematic, deep and beautiful. The Chinese characters are pictographic characters which stem from pictures that present certain objects, meanings and thoughts. Students can be greatly stimulated for learning, for thinking, as well as for memory strengthening. The kindergarten leadership team adopted a Chinese language curriculum and made adjustments with the belief that those adjustments will equip students with attention ability, observation ability, memory ability,

imagination ability, and thinking ability.

English language curriculum - Letters learning should be integrated with objects (connect the twenty-six letters with interesting objects); words learning should be integrated with stories (connect the sequence of letters in words with stories); instruction should be integrated with games (high level of interaction between teachers and students); and learning setbacks should be avoided during long word pronunciation (change or delete long and difficult words if most students cannot pronounce well).

Science curriculum - Abstract things are abstracted from specific objects. Science curriculum, which makes students touch specific objects, can gradually make students recognize abstract numbers. In this way, students can gradually use their abstract thinking to understand the concept of number, the concept of space and the concept of time.

Vision operationalizes the value (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). The vision held by the kindergarten leadership team was integrated in curriculum adoption. It influenced the curriculum decision-making and the way of curriculum instruction.

## **Vectors**

Strategic planning and thinking led to decision makers choosing directions. Vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action (Fairholm, 2009, p.10). The curriculum process is based on the principles which define the direction of action as vectors. For example, in the lesson “Spotted Deer” of the Chinese language curriculum, there are five steps in “Steps of instruction and learning”. The first step “students read” is based on principle of entirety recognition, the second step “cards” is based on the principle of hearing and seeing, the third step “read after teacher” is based on the principle of entirety recognition,

the fourth step “performance” is based on the principle of entirety recognition, and the fifth step “cards again” is based on the principle of hearing and seeing. Also, in the lesson “Why newspaper has electricity” of the science curriculum, there are five steps in “Steps of instruction and learning”. The first step “teacher shows the process” is based on the principle of science enlightenment, the second step “teacher explains the phenomenon” is based on the principle of science enlightenment, the third step “students do the experiment themselves” is based on the principle of science enlightenment and principle of logic formation, the fourth step “count the newspapers” is based on the principle of counting, and the fifth step “learn the shape of newspaper” is based on principle of geometry learning.

Vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). That is how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions to adopt curriculum.

### **Voice**

Strategic planning and thinking require leaders to pay attention to all voices. Voice makes leadership relationship work. Evidence from the decision-making data indicated that the kindergarten leadership team concerned the voices of teachers and parents. The team addressed teacher voice when adopting curriculum. With the teachers’ recommendations that music is helpful in learning poetry and Chinese, the leadership team adopted Tang Poetry Music and Reading for Children in 2006. With the parents’ recommendations that fables are helpful for children to grow, the kindergarten leadership team adopted Fables in 2011. With the voice from teachers that app technology is helpful for story listening, the kindergarten leadership team adopted the story learning app “Baby Story” in 2015. With the voice from parents and teachers that students can have more interest in learning Chinese with poetry, the

kindergarten leadership team adopted the rhyme app “Rhyme Duoduo” in 2016. These adjustments reflect voice, integrating values, vision and vectors which led to the decision-making process.

Voice makes the leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). Through voice, opinions on curriculum were heard, discussions on curriculum were carried out, and solutions to curriculum were implemented.

### **Interaction of the two theoretical frameworks**

The CIPP framework and the four V’s framework presented two perspectives on the curriculum decision-making process, providing lenses for the kindergarten leadership team members as they made decisions about curriculum adoption and implementation. The CIPP provided a framework to analyze meeting outcomes, and the four V’s provided a framework for analysis of the curriculum decision-making process. In the analysis, context was analyzed for reasons for meetings, inputs were analyzed for which materials informed the meetings, process was analyzed for the decision-making process, and product was analyzed by the results of the meeting. Meetings were the activities to exchange ideas and to perfect curriculum. The decision-making process, with the four V’s analysis, explained the core logic for curriculum adoption. Values, vision, vectors, and sometimes voice, led the curriculum decision-making and made the curriculum as what it is now. The curriculum adoption process is according to the knowledge of the leadership team, and the curriculum was designed step by step in a systematical way.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The focus of the study was to evaluate leadership effectiveness through the curriculum adoption process in a kindergarten. The purpose of the study was to analyze the decision-making process used by the kindergarten leadership team to adopt, implement, and evaluate curriculum for the academic and social development of kindergarten students. In chapter five, the researcher first presents a brief review of the study. That review is followed by findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

#### Program Evaluation Process

The study site was a Chinese kindergarten with the pseudonym ABC which had conducted early childhood education for students for eighteen years. The CIPP framework from Stufflebeam (1971) and the four V's framework from Fairholm (2009) were used to analyze the decision-making by the kindergarten leadership team for curriculum adoption. In CIPP, "C" stands for *context*, "I" stands for *inputs*, "P" stands for *process*, and the next "P" stands for *product*. Fairholm's four V's stand for values, vision, vectors and voice. The four V's were considered by the researcher as the subset of *product* during the analysis.

The description of the ABC kindergarten was the *context*. CKEG and the leadership team's beliefs were the *inputs*. Analysis of how values drive decisions, student assessments, as well as documentation of six meetings on curriculum decision-making for one academic year were the contents in the *process*. In *product*, values, vision, vectors and voice from Fairholm (2009) were used to analyze the decision-making process for three curriculum areas: Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum, and science curriculum.

Values reflect meaning and purpose, vision operationalizes the value set, vectors operationalize the magnitude and the direction of action, and voice makes leadership relationship work (Fairholm, 2009, p. 10). This kind of strategic thinking and strategic planning was used to manage and lead the decision-making process. Here is a brief review of the three curriculum areas and examples of the four V's:

#### *Chinese language curriculum*

Values: Students should develop thinking habits and advanced language ability.

Vision: Early reading.

Vectors: Principle of acquired sensitivity, principle of environment classroom, principle of hearing and seeing, principle of habit formation, principle of gradual comprehension, principle of joyful games, principle of encouragement and praise, principle of entirety recognition.

Voice: Feedback from teachers and parents.

#### *English language curriculum*

Values: Students should develop advanced language ability and friendly communication.

Vision: Early foreign language study.

Vectors: New Concept English instruction, integrate learning letters with objects, integrate learning words with stories, integrate instruction with games, avoid setbacks during long word pronunciation.

Voice: Feedback from teachers and parents.

#### *Science curriculum*

Values: Students should develop thinking habits, develop vast interests, and become

curious about different things.

Vision: Early mathematics.

Vectors: Principle of sensory training, principle of counting, principle of science enlightenment, principle of geometry learning, principle of logic formation

Voice: Feedback from teachers and parents.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

#### **Research Question 1: How does the kindergarten leadership team make decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum?**

The kindergarten leadership team documented in this study made decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum based on knowledge of the CKEG standards, the kindergarten leadership team's own values and vision for early childhood education, and by attending to the voices of teachers and parents. Curriculum goals, curriculum emphases, curriculum preparation, and curriculum process were considered by the leadership team during curriculum adoption. Curriculum goals reflected vision, curriculum emphases reflected values, and the steps in the curriculum process reflected the principles the leadership team members held themselves for the direction of action or vectors. The leadership team took into consideration values, vision, vectors and sometimes voice from teachers and parents to make decisions for curriculum adoption.

The meeting data drawn from one year of documentation portrayed a decision-making pattern that included: reviewing curriculum through meeting and adjusting curriculum through discussion. At the first meeting at the beginning of the semester, the leadership team discussed curriculum considering the whole picture of the school. Meetings conducted in

October, December, February, and April provided additional documentation about how the leadership team used student assessments to evaluate the current curriculum and proposed ideas for making adjustments accordingly. At the meeting in June, the leadership team conclusively reviewed student assessments, teacher feedback, and parents' feedback about the curriculum of the academic year and made preparations for the next semester. Curriculum meetings played an essential role in making curriculum more suitable for students' development.

The leadership team considered several aspects of child development throughout their decision-making. The values that guided their decision-making are: students should develop thinking habits, develop vast interests, become curious about different things, develop advanced language ability, as well as form positive characteristics, friendly communication, polite attitude, and confidence. Trawick-Smith (2009) argued: "Some children are socially oriented, working best cooperatively and in groups, other children value individual achievement and enjoy competition" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 43).

On a more applied level, there are principles that the team uses. For Chinese curriculum, the principles are: principle of acquired sensitivity, principle of environment classroom, principle of hearing and seeing, principle of habit formation, principle of gradual comprehension, principle of joyful games, principle of encouragement and praise, and principle of entirety recognition. For science curriculum, the principles are: principle of sensory training, principle of counting, principle of science enlightenment, principle of geometry learning, and principle of logic formation.



Curriculum adjustment through discussions on meeting was an important step in curriculum adoption.

### **Example lessons**

The curriculum evaluation using the four V's reported in chapter four included examples of the decision-making process from the three content areas: Chinese language, English language, and science. In the example lessons presented in chapter four, the four V's lenses demonstrated that the leadership team's "values" were evident in developing thinking habits, vast interests and advanced language ability for students; their "vision" was evident in early reading and early foreign language study; their "vectors" were evident in the principles for each lesson; and their "voice" was evident in the feedback they took from teachers and parents. This was how the leadership team adopted curriculum.

The example lesson "Spotted Deer" from the Chinese language curriculum, short article reading from the English language curriculum, and the example lesson "Why the newspaper has electricity" from the science curriculum were adopted according to the four V's. Curriculum emphases were the values, curriculum goals were the vision, curriculum processes were the vectors, and feedback from teachers and parents was the voice. In the example lesson "Spotted Deer" from the Chinese language curriculum, there were two principles in curriculum process or vectors: principle of entirety recognition and principle of hearing and seeing. The curriculum process was designed according to the two principles. Step two "students read" aligned with principle of entirety recognition, step three "cards" aligned with principle of hearing and seeing, step four "read after the teacher" aligned with principle of entirety recognition, step five "performance" aligned with principle of entirety

recognition, and step six “cards again” aligned with principle of hearing and seeing.

In the example lesson “Why the newspaper has electricity” from the science curriculum, there were four principles in curriculum process or vectors: principle of science enlightenment, principle of logic formation, principle of counting, and principle of geometry learning. Step two, “teacher shows the process”, aligned with principle of science enlightenment; step three, “teacher explains the phenomenon”, aligned with principle of science enlightenment; step four, “students do the experiment themselves”, aligned with principle of logic formation and principle of science enlightenment; step five, “count the newspapers”, aligned with principle of counting; and step six, “learn the shape of newspaper”, aligned with principle of geometry learning.

Values, vision, vectors and voice provided the framework for curriculum adoption. This was how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions about adoption of kindergarten curriculum.

### **Research Question 2: How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate the quality of kindergarten curriculum?**

The kindergarten leadership team members evaluated the quality of kindergarten curriculum according to their own perspectives: whether the curriculum quality was connected with curriculum goals, curriculum emphases, and curriculum process. Curriculum goals were linked to vision, curriculum emphases were linked to values, and curriculum process was linked to the principles the leadership team members held by themselves for the direction of action as vectors.

The decision-making pattern, reviewing curriculum through meeting and adjusting

curriculum through discussion, was portrayed by the meeting data drawn from one year of documentation. Research by Copple and Bredekamp (2009) supported that early childhood education theory should inform programs that serve children from birth to age 8 and that are designed to promote children's intellectual, social, emotional, language, and physical development and learning (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 3). Evaluating these aspects was also evident in the four V's for the three curriculum strands reported in chapter four.

Evaluation of curriculum was initially based on the CKEG standards and further developed to reflect the leadership team's values that extended those standards. The Chinese language curriculum, English language curriculum and science curriculum were modified and enriched over time according to meeting data, students' assessments, and the perspectives from teachers and parents. Those inputs informed how curricula were adopted, and reflect values, vision, vectors, and voice.

Values, vision, vectors, and voice provided the framework for curriculum evaluation. This was how the kindergarten leadership team made decisions about adoption, implementation, and evaluation to the kindergarten curriculum.

**Research Question 3: How does the kindergarten leadership team evaluate student learning in the three curriculum areas of Chinese language, English language and science?**

The evaluation guidelines for each content area are from the vision of the kindergarten leadership team. For Chinese language curriculum, the leadership team analyzed activity literacy, game literacy, scenario literacy and reading literacy. For English language

curriculum, the team analyzed what words students can learn, what expressions students can use and whether students can read English books. For science curriculum, the team analyzed whether students had an interest in science, what students can learn from the science curriculum and how students can explain concepts if they met similar science phenomena.

Here are some curriculum guidelines for the three content areas. For Chinese language curriculum, the guidelines are: children can be happy to communicate with others and talk politely; for English language curriculum, the guidelines are: children can pay attention to what others are talking and can understand daily expression; for science curriculum, the guidelines are: children can be interested in the surrounding objects and phenomena as well as can have curiosity and desire to learn.

The five student assessments for one academic year and the student assessment at the end of an academic year were used in the decision-making for evaluating student learning. The CIPP framework was applied to analyze the documentation from the meetings. The leadership team's process for evaluating student learning was evident in the four V's for the three curriculum areas reported in chapter four.

Values, vision, vectors and voice provided the framework for evaluating student learning. This was how the kindergarten leadership team evaluated student learning in the three curriculum areas of Chinese language, English language and science.

**Research Question 4: How does the curriculum they have adopted align with the CKEG national standards for kindergarten curriculum in China?**

The national standards of CKEG have requirements that kindergarten curriculum needs to emphasize five fields of study for students: health, language, sociality, science and

art. The curricula that the kindergarten team adopted aligned with the CKEG national standards. The kindergarten leadership team used the CKEG as a baseline, then extended the curriculum to make it more comprehensive. For example, for Chinese language curriculum, CKEG does not specify the instruction steps but the leadership team specified the instruction steps in each lesson; for English language curriculum, CKEG does not indicate a specific foreign language to learn, but the leadership team adopted English as a foreign language and taught students to ensure they have the ability to communicate and read in English; for science curriculum, CKEG just requires students can learn from life and games the quantitative relations of objects, but the leadership team strongly connected math concepts to those lessons where students were learning science.

From the outcomes reviewed above, the curricula adopted aligned with the CKEG national standards for kindergarten curriculum in China.

### **Implications of Findings**

The study focused on the kindergarten leadership team's decision-making on curriculum adoption, implementation, and assessment. The framework used to analyze the leadership team's decision-making used the four V's provided by Fairholm (2009). Fairholm (2009) outlined a conceptual framework delineating two types of decision-making strategies. Strategic planning is for the management domain while strategic thinking is for the leadership domain (Fairholm, 2009). Strategic thinking was evident in the values and vision the leadership team held in the curriculum adoption process; strategic planning was evident in the vectors and voice the leadership team considered during the curriculum adoption. The findings highlighted that adopting kindergarten curriculum was guided by values and vision,

and the leadership team considered vectors and voice. The kindergarten curriculum was adopted step by step according to those values and was taught step by step with each concern reflecting the principles held by the leadership team.

The findings aligned with the key research about the curriculum design as presented in the literature review chapter. That alignment is presented in the next section.

### **Chinese language curriculum**

The Chinese language curriculum adoption aligned with the argument outlined by Hendrick and Weissman (2010): “Learning content requires such mental abilities as attending, listening, observing, remembering, and recounting” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 463). Chinese article reading activities such as “Spotted Deer” aligned with Henniger’s (2009) recommendations: “Thematic teaching provides hands-on discovery which is highly motivating to children” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 463). Also, the step by step curriculum instruction process aligned with Brewer’s (2007) suggestions: “Themes and projects help practitioners organize their thinking, choose relevant activities and vocabulary to support curricular goals, and locate resources prior to implementing their plans” (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 462).

### **English language curriculum**

The New Concept English instruction with additional instruction methods such as integrating learning letters with objects, integrating learning words with stories and integrating instruction with games aligned with the guidance of Neuharth-Pritchett, Hamilton, and Schwanenflugel (2005) that alphabetic awareness includes children learning letter shapes, letter names, letter sounds, and letter writing (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren,

2011, p. 341).

### **Science curriculum**

The science enlightenment factor in the science curriculum aligned with theories of Piaget (1952): “There are four stages in children’s development: sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage, and formal operational stage” (as cited in Santrock, 2004, p. 41). The math knowledge extension from the science curriculum aligned with Charlesworth and Lind (2009), who suggested that concepts children are developing in science and language will be important for logical-mathematical extensions (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 319). The teamwork stage in the science curriculum instruction process aligned with Berndt (2002), Murphy (2002) and Payton (2008), who suggest that children who have better social skills and more positive social attitudes tend to do better academically than less socially skilled children (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 398).

The content of the curriculum reflected theories of instruction in these three content areas. The leadership team emphasized developing students’ thinking habits, developing vast interests, and developing advanced language ability. These values produced vision: early reading, early foreign language study, as well as early mathematics. With the values and vision, curriculum was adopted and designed with principles as vectors and adjusted with feedback as voice. Values and vision informs strategic thinking as well as vectors and voice inform strategic planning. Both mattered in curriculum adoption because strategic thinking defined the way of curriculum adoption and strategic planning paved the way of curriculum adoption.

### **Informing Stakeholders**

This study was conducted with the support of the ABC kindergarten leadership team. The team members are not fluent in English, and the study has not yet been translated into Chinese. Member check, which encourages the researcher to bring back the research to the leadership team for them to check, is an important step to strengthen the research. However, since the members of the leadership team are not fluent in English, other approaches to stakeholder engagement were used.

To inform the leadership team about the initial findings of the study, the researcher did the following: first, he explained to the leadership team the theme of the research and the research structure, then explained to the leadership team important focuses that were connected with their work, then encouraged the leadership team members to check the research and encouraged the leadership team members to ask questions they might have. Since the data were collected with the help of the leadership team and their questions were generally addressed during the research process, there was little to revise after member check.

Other kindergartens in China and foreign kindergartens may have somewhat different situations. The leadership teams in Chinese kindergartens can combine the curriculum adoption in this research with the specific situations in their kindergartens. Foreign kindergartens, since foreign education may be different from education in China, can refer to the curriculum adoption process in the research and make specific changes according to the education requirements in their countries.



### **Recommendations for Action**

The researcher has several recommendations based on this study. Curriculum adoption needs to be carried out in a formal process. School leaders need to take the formal process which includes the values of the leadership team themselves and the official requirements. Student development should be considered a priority.

Regarding the importance of understanding how kindergarten leadership teams decide about curriculum adoption, research can be further carried out with the perspective of the external factors that are influencing the decision-making about curriculum adoption. Those factors include perspectives from foreign kindergartens and perspectives from other kindergartens in China. From the literature review chapter, the arts are integral to a high-quality education and must be included in the curriculum in order for students to succeed both in school and later in life (Arts Education Partnership, 2004). Those factors may influence the leadership team's curriculum adoption process from which curriculum can be more open or can be more versatile. Therefore, kindergarten leadership teams in China can consider more external factors and build on CKEG standards when adopting curriculum.

Regarding the importance of understanding how kindergarten leadership teams decide about curriculum adoption, research can be furthered through engaging family beliefs about the curriculum. From the literature review chapter, Bern (2009) proposes: "Family members provide children with their first social relationships, their models for behaviors and roles, a framework of values and beliefs, and intellectual stimulation" (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 7). These factors may influence the leadership team's curriculum adoption process from which curriculum can be more supportive to family

education or can be more collaborative with family members.

Regarding the importance of understanding how kindergarten leadership teams decide about curriculum adoption, research can be furthered through inviting teachers' opinions. From the literature review chapter, teachers' knowledge of child development and learning, understanding of curriculum, awareness of family and community relationships, knowledge of assessment and interpretation of professional role influence what teachers do (NAEYC, 2009). These factors may influence the leadership team's curriculum adoption process and the design of the curriculum, integrating the importance of the teacher's expertise.

Regarding the importance of understanding how kindergarten leadership teams decide about curriculum adoption, research can be furthered through inviting the opinions from group work about curriculum. From the literature review chapter, Copple and Bredekamp (2009) suggest that early childhood education involves any program serving children from birth to age 8 that is designed to promote children's intellectual, social, emotional, language, and physical development and learning through groups (as cited in Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2011, p. 3). These factors may influence the leadership team's curriculum adoption process as they choose curriculum can emphasize group work.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study addressed the decision-making by the kindergarten leadership team for curriculum adoption. Curriculum is one of the key components for an educational organization. Curriculum should be adopted systematically and step by step with each concerns. School management influenced by curriculum can be carried out as a meaningful research area. Also, children's growth is influenced by curriculum. Curricula students have

learned in kindergarten will play out in different ways at different ages. Students' progress can be tracked to see how these curricula influence student development. Considering the above, researchers can continue to study this topic from the management perspective. How does curriculum influence the organization's development or, from the biological perspective, how does curriculum influence children's growth at each age? Also, how should leaders structure an organization to influence the quality of curriculum? Researchers can further carry on research with a topic concerning how organizational structure plays a role in curriculum quality.

### **Conclusion**

This research brought new perspectives on curriculum adoption in kindergarten and how one kindergarten leadership team made decisions to adopt curriculum. Although this research had some limitations, it can provide scholarly knowledge on leadership effectiveness on curriculum adoption in kindergartens.

The results of this study can be of use to individuals who are interested in kindergarten curriculum adoption as well as kindergarten leadership teams seeking approaches for effective curriculum adoption. The findings of this study add to the leadership research about school management and decision-making for curriculum adoption according to Fairholm's framework of values, vision, vectors and voice which articulated the curriculum adoption process.

The leadership team in this study had strong beliefs about how curriculum influenced student development. Curriculum was adopted and designed step by step through discussions, experimentations, assessments, and modifications. A well-crafted and well-designed

curriculum followed Fairholm's four V's. The four V's provided the framework for curriculum adoption. A kindergarten leadership team should first have values which guide the curriculum decision-making. Keeping values in mind, kindergarten leadership team then builds a vision which articulates the expected learning outcomes. The curriculum goals which reflect the vision and the curriculum emphases which act as values are the first two steps of designing a curriculum. Following the third step "preparation", the fourth step is the curriculum process which acts as vectors. In the curriculum process or vectors, curriculum instruction should be carried out step by step and steps should be connected with corresponding principles. Feedback from teachers and parents acts as voice and should be discussed at meetings to inform curriculum adjustment. Kindergarten leadership teams should adopt quality curriculum for students' development and kindergarten students benefit directly from leaders' commitment to create a well-designed curriculum.

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## APPENDIX A

The national standards of CKEG (2001)

### **Health Curriculum**

- With the health curriculum, children can be healthy and can be happy in group living.
- With the health curriculum, children can form sound habits of living and health and can have the ability to live by oneself.
- With the health curriculum, children can learn some necessary safety knowledge and can learn to self-protect.
- With the health curriculum, children can be interested in participating physical activities with harmonious and flexible behaviors.

### **Language Curriculum**

- With the language curriculum, children can be happy to communicate with others and talk politely.
- With the language curriculum, children can pay attention to what others are talking and can understand daily expression.
- With the language curriculum, children can express clearly what they want to express.
- With the language curriculum, children can be interested in listening to stories and reading books.
- With the language curriculum, children can understand and can speak Chinese.

### **Sociality Curriculum**

- With social curriculum, children can positively participate in different kinds of activities with confidence.
- With social curriculum, children can be willing to communicate with others, help each other, cooperate, share and have sympathy.
- With social curriculum, children can understand and comply with basic social behavior regulations in daily life.
- With social curriculum, children can make effort to do what they can do without fearing difficulties and can be equipped with preliminary responsibilities.
- With social curriculum, children can love parents and elders, teachers and companions, and can love group, hometown and the country.

### **Science Curriculum**

- With science curriculum, children can be interested in the surrounding objects and phenomena, can have curiosity and desire to learn.
- With science curriculum, children can use different organs to search questions.
- With science curriculum, children can use proper ways to express and communicate the procedure and result.
- With science curriculum, children can learn from life and games the quantitative relations of objects and can recognize the importance and interest of math.
- With science curriculum, children can love and protect animals and plant, care about surrounding environment, love nature, cherish natural resources and learn preliminary concept of environment protection.

**Art Curriculum**

- With art curriculum, children can love the beauty from environment, life and art.
- With art curriculum, children can be interested in participating art activities and can express their feelings and experience.
- With art curriculum, children can perform art activities from the ways they like.

## APPENDIX B

Curriculum adoption proposed by CKEG (2001)

### **Health Curriculum Adoption**

- Health curriculum should establish sound relationships between teachers and students and among companions, should make children feel warm and happy in group living, should make children form a sense of safety and trust.
- Health curriculum should take some opinions from parents to establish scientific regular life accordingly. Curriculum should make children form sound habits and abilities such as eating, sleeping and washing.
- Health curriculum should educate children to be clean and healthy, teach children to keep tidy not only personally but also for the places they are living.
- Health curriculum should give children knowledge about safety, nutrition and health care by integrating daily life, and should raise children's consciousness and ability of self-protection.
- Health curriculum should include different kinds of interesting outdoor games and physical activities, make children form the interest and habit of physical activity participation. From the curriculum, children can strengthen physique and enhance the ability of adaptation to environment.
- Health curriculum should develop children's basic movement from the way children are interested, should improve the harmony and flexibility.

- In physical activities, health curriculum should cultivate children to form the characteristics of bravery and insistence and to form the attitudes of positivity, optimistic and cooperation.

### **Language Curriculum Adoption**

- Language curriculum should create a free and relax environment for language communication; should support, encourage and attract the communication between children and teachers and among companions. Language curriculum should make children feel happy when communicating and make children communicate with proper and polite expressions.
- Language curriculum should make children form the habit of careful listening and should develop children's language comprehension ability.
- Language curriculum should encourage children to express their thinking and feeling and should encourage children to try to describe simple objects and procedures. Language curriculum should develop children's language expression ability and thinking ability.
- Language curriculum should lead children to outstanding children literacy works, make children feel the richness and beauty from language, and enhance children's comprehension through different kinds of activities.
- Language curriculum should make children interested in daily simple signs and text symbols.
- Language curriculum should use reading, drawing and other methods to simulate children's interest in books and writing.



- Language curriculum should provide environment for language speaking, help children familiarize, understand and speak Chinese.

### **Sociality Curriculum Adoption**

- Social curriculum should lead children to participate in different kinds of activities, should make them feel the happiness when living together with teachers and companions, should help them correctly recognize themselves and other, should form intimate and cooperative attitude towards others and society, and should make them equipped with preliminary communication skills.
- Social curriculum should provide each children with the opportunities to express their strengths and make achievements, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence.
- Social curriculum should provide children with free activities, support children to select and plan activities, encourage them to solve problems from different ways, and make them not to give up.
- Social curriculum should make children recognize, experience and understand basic social behavior regulations with different teaching methods, and should make children self-disciplined and respectful to others.
- Social curriculum should teach children to love and protect toys and other objects, making them protect public objects and environment.
- Social curriculum should teach children to know the occupations of their relatives, making children love the laborer and respect the work achievement.
- Social curriculum should make children feel the richness and beauty of the country, feel the change and development of hometown and stimulate the feeling of loving

hometown and the country.

- Social curriculum should introduce all ethnic groups in China and other countries and the cultures, making children feel the variety and difference of human culture and helping children form the attitudes of comprehension, respect and equality.

### **Science Curriculum Adoption**

- Science curriculum should stimulate children's interest to surrounding objects and phenomena, making them have desire to do research.
- Science curriculum should create relax environment for children's exploration activities, give each student opportunities to participate, support them and encourage them bring up questions, let them express different opinions, and make them respect others' points of reviews and experience.
- Science curriculum should provide science materials and activity conditions so that each student can use different organs and methods to explore.
- Science curriculum should improve children's ability to learn cooperatively by making positively participating group discussions and exploration. Science curriculum should teach children to use different ways to express, communicate and share the exploration process and result.
- Science curriculum should make children interested in number, quantity, shape, time, space in the surrounding environment, make children establish preliminary concept of number, and make them use simple math methods to solve simple questions in life and games.
- Science curriculum should make children feel how science technologies influence

daily life and stimulate their interest in science.

- Science curriculum should help children understand nature and environment, enhancing the behavior of environment protection.

### **Art Curriculum Adoption**

- Art curriculum should introduce children the beautiful objects around them, enrich their perceptual experience and aesthetic interest, and stimulate them to express beauty and create beauty.
- Art curriculum should take all children into consideration, pay attention to different characteristics and needs of different children, and make each student feel the sense of beauty.
- Art curriculum should provide children opportunities to perform freely, encourage children to express their feeling, understanding and imagination, respect the idea and creation of each student, take in their unique aesthetic feelings and ways of expressions, and share the happiness they create.
- Art curriculum should help children to improve performance skills and abilities while supporting and encouraging children to positively participate in different art activities.
- Art curriculum should teach children to use surrounding old objects and materials to make new toys and crafts to beautify life or for other activities.
- Art curriculum should create environment for children to exhibit their works, making them communicate with each other, appreciate each other and improve together.

## APPENDIX C

### Explanation about the Chinese language curriculum

Nursery Rhymes is for age 1.5 to age 3, Ancient and Contemporary Poetry is for age 4 to age 5, Tang Poetry Music and Reading for Children is for age 1.5 to age 6, Language and Reading for Children is for age 1.5 to age 6, Fables is for age 1.5 to age 3. Also, there are a system developed by this kindergarten for language teaching and apps adopted for language instruction. The system includes these curricula above and is used for language teaching and other instructions. The apps used for language include the Chinese learning app “Baby Learning Pinyin and Chinese Characters”, the story learning app “Baby Story”, and the rhyme app “Rhyme Duoduo”. When implementing the app teaching method, the smart phone is connected to the television so what is displaying on the smart phone is displaying on the television.

## APPENDIX D

### The lessons from New Concept English Starter A and Starter B

New Concept English Starter A the kindergarten adopted for English curriculum is for students from age 2 to age 4. Each unit has three lessons. The forty-five lessons in Starter A not only give children introduction of English from letters to words to some simple sentences, but also attract students and make them love English.

Unit 1	Hello!
Unit 2	Yummy!
Unit 3	Look at your red nose!
Unit 4	Thank you, Mum!
Unit 5	Look! The zoo!
Unit 6	This is my family.
Unit 7	Happy brthday!
Unit 8	That's my book.
Unit 9	What's this, Mum?
Unit 10	I'm ten!
Unit 11	Flora is tall
Unit 12	I'm a doctor.
Unit 13	This is his rabiit.
Unit 14	What colour is your T-shirt?
Unit 15	Where's my bone?

*Figure 5* New Concept English Starter A

Starter B is adopted for children from age 4 to age 6. Starter B also has fifteen units and each unit has three lessons.

Unit 1	That's my father!	
Unit 2	This is our house.	
Unit 3	Get off the bed!	
Unit 4	It's time for lunch!	
Unit 5	That's Ted's puppet.	
Unit 6	This is my uncle's farm.	
Unit 7	What super food!	
Unit 8	They're Dad's shoes!	
Unit 9	They're happy dogs.	
Unit 10	What pretty flowers!	
Unit 11	Nineteen bones in the house!	
Unit 12	Hide behind the bush!	
Unit 13	I can dance!	
Unit 14	They're amazing!	
Unit 15	Let's play football!	

*Figure 6* New Concept English Starter B

## APPENDIX E

### The lessons of the science curriculum

	Why the newspaper has electricity	
	Stick in the water	
	The bottle "eats" the egg	
	The separation of pepper powder and salt	
	The electrical balloon	
	The lovely water imprint	
	Separation and gathering of water flow	
	Floating needle	
	Thick paper with holes can hold water	
	Plastic plate cannot fall	
	The shining candle	
	Candle water pump	
	Blow the balloon inside the bottle	
	The cup that can catch the balloon	
	The cup that can absorb water	
	The shrunken bottle	
	The table-tennis that can jump far	
	The bottle that can blow bubble	
	Interesting plant roots	
	Flowing water	

We like music	
Make a kettle that can spray water	
Observe earthworm	
Categorize garbage	
Interesting seeds	
Trees	
Air	
The space	
Three forms of water: solid, liquid, and gas	
Where does rain come from	
The tools used for warmth in winter	
How do animals live in winter	
The changing shadow	
Fast consecutive changes make movies	
The paper cup	
Nice helper: the tools	
Plant transplantation	
Soilless cultivation	
Toys with spring	
Rolling tires	

Figure 7 The Science Curriculum